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# 'HANDED O V E R'

The Prison Experiences of Mr. J.  
Scott Duckers, Solicitor, of Chancery  
Lane, under the Military Service Act

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF

WITH FOREWARD

By T. EDMUND HARVEY, M.P.



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MR. J. SCOTT DUCKERS, SOLICITOR,  
OF CHANCERY LANE, UNDER THE  
MILITARY SERVICE ACT

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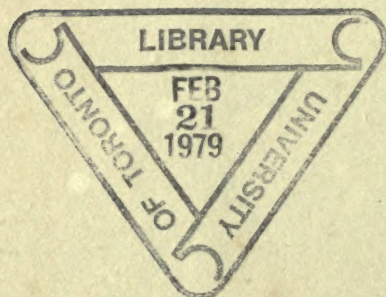
WITH FOREWORD

By T. EDMUND HARVEY, M.P.

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## FOREWORD

BY T. EDMUND HARVEY, M.P.

MANY who do not share the writer's view that the ideal of Christian citizenship leads to a way of life in which military service becomes no longer possible will not find it easy to read these pages without respect for the prisoner who wrote them, or without admiration for the calm spirit in which he records his experience, shewing no trace of unkindly feeling towards those whose duty it has been to punish him. The narrative of Mr. Scott Duckers, to which I have been asked to contribute a preface, has a claim upon the reader's attention apart from its intrinsic interest, and it is this claim especially of which I desire to write. The first part was written from a cell in a military barracks; its author has been court-martialled, sent back to the Army and once more court-martialled, and he is now in a civil prison. Yet he is still accounted in the eyes of the law a soldier.

His present position, like this narrative, vindicates his claim that no Act of Parliament can over-ride the deepest convictions of a man's being, that it is as



impossible to make black into white by legislation as to make this citizen into a soldier by enacting that on and after a certain date he should be deemed to be a soldier. The offences for which Mr. Scott Duckers has been punished, and is still being punished, though technically separate breaches of military discipline, are in fact one offence only, his persistent refusal to be a soldier at all.

It is true that the Military Service Act provided recognition for the position of those who could not conscientiously enter the Army; but it was by machinery which was imperfect and unequal in its operation. In the nature of the case the task of men who have to judge of the sincerity of another man's convictions is very difficult; even with the best of goodwill, which perhaps has not been always present, and with the calmest and clearest of judicial minds, which every member of a Tribunal can hardly be expected to possess, mistakes must almost inevitably occur. How much more must this happen when the Tribunals, constituted in the main for different duties, are working at high pressure, when the applicants are often ignorant and state their cases badly, when the feelings which the war has roused colour insensibly the minds both of members of the Tribunal and of the conscientious objectors themselves, so that on both sides there is distrust and sometimes defiance?

Mr. Scott Duckers refused to recognise the right of Tribunals to try his conscience. If we think him wrong in carrying his protest to the extent of refusing to make any claim by the method which the State had appointed (and I for one regret this decision),

we still may feel that there is injustice in the State's continuing indefinitely to punish him for this offence on his part, and unwisdom in its insisting on retaining in the ranks of the Army a man whose presence there must only be a continual protest, and not an ineffective one, against the whole system of military discipline to which he is subjected.

As was pointed out by Lord Courtney of Penwith during the passing of the second Military Service Act, the State might order its citizens to become soldiers, and might affix a penalty if they do not comply; the penalty might be a severe one, but it should be based on the fact that these men are civilians who have refused to be soldiers. The Military Service Act punishes men as soldiers, and not as defaulting citizens; if this punishment succeeded in breaking the will of the defaulter it would still fail to make a good soldier of him; as it is, it may impair his mind and weaken his body, it may prevent him from rendering in the future to the community useful service of which he was capable, while the sense of the futility of this form of punishment may embitter not merely those who suffer, but a large number of others who, while they do not share their views, are convinced of their sincerity.

This applies not only to the case of men like Mr. Scott Duckers, but to a number of others, some of them men whose whole lives have been devoted to unselfish labour for others, who, because they have refused to undertake some specific form of "work of national importance," have after the lapse of twenty-one days been placed by the Tribunal in the



non-combatant ranks of the Army, although it has been admitted by the previous decision of the Tribunal that their conscientious objection to military service is sincere. Surely if these men must be punished this form of punishment at least is indefensible. However much one regrets their unwillingness to render a service which they regard as a compromise which they cannot rightly undertake, can it be just that men who in other ways have proved their worth as citizens should be imprisoned as disobedient soldiers, only leaving their cells to be again court-martialled and sent back to gaol?

The determined idealism and the strong conviction which makes them willing to tread this difficult path has more in common than their critics realise with the spirit which inspired that great company of chivalrous men who in the early months of this war offered their lives to defend by force of arms a great ideal of freedom and of justice. As the war goes on and the toll of sacrifice grows heavier, one cannot wonder that there should be little sympathy for men who think so much of their duty to the eternal law that they cannot comply with a task laid upon them by the law of to-day, which to them is at variance with that higher duty. If out of the unmeasurable suffering through which Europe is passing we are in the end to come forth to some better stage of life, which may in some sense reward the unselfish sacrifice of the volunteers who have died for freedom, will not the new world need the life and labour of these humbler strugglers for an ideal, who also have made their sacrifice, giving up home and friendships



and the esteem of men, to endure disgrace and imprisonment for their faith?

It is doubtless true that all who have claimed on grounds of conscience exemption from military service are not men of this stamp: some may have made such a claim a cloak for selfishness, slackness or cowardice. Few such men, however, would long stand the pressure of opinion, the jeers of the barracks, the iron monotony of prison life: it would be so much easier to accept, at least in appearance, the task laid upon them and to trust to the thousand chances and subterfuges by which the rogue and the slacker are able to shirk their duty. At the worst it is better for the State that ten knaves should escape punishment than that one innocent man should suffer wrongfully. At present not one but scores of honest, able and unselfish men are in prison for conscience' sake. Obstinate and inconvenient to the State they doubtless are, mistaken many of them may be in their particular views, yet who can doubt that the State itself suffers when it persists in such a punishment? The waste of the individual life is not the worst loss. To many who do not share the views of Mr. Scott Duckers, but who are convinced of his probity and entire sincerity, there must come at times a doubt as to the justice of the State which continues to punish him: they may recall the words of Thoreau: "Under a government which imprisons any unjustly, the true place for a just man is also a prison."

Yet the man who suffers for what he believes to be a good cause is not left without comfort. He will

remember how our liberties of to-day were won in the prison cells of the past. For the moment it may seem that the inconvenient protest of an unpopular minority has been effectively suppressed, or at least put out of the way. But in the end the clamour of the Press, the outcry of the platform and the eloquence of the pulpit cannot prevail against the still, small voice of truth in prison.

T. EDMUND HARVEY.

*October 17th, 1916.*







JAMES SCOTT DUCKERS

## “ HANDED-OVER ”

### PART I.

THE National Register was taken on the 15th August 1915. We were told at the time that it had nothing to do with conscription, and though perhaps I may have felt some scepticism on that point, I did not feel that there was any reason which would impel me to refuse to give the particulars required by law. I believe that as far as possible we should obey the law even in matters of which we strongly disapprove. My training as a lawyer has led me to respect and admire the legal systems which centuries of effort have built up in this and other countries; to recognise in them increasingly efficient instruments for maintaining freedom and securing justice; and to follow the development of juridical principles and their application to the fresh needs of developing societies; so that, while appreciating the need for constant improvement and the urgency of various kinds of legal reform, I am inclined to take a view different from that of persons whose attention has been attracted only by hard cases of apparent injustice. I see in jurisprudence, not a chance collection of arbitrary rules and precedents, but a body of principles essential to the life of an organised community, pervading and regulating the whole of human society, and oper-

ating most efficiently not in the border-line cases which are litigated in the courts, but in preserving that freedom, peace, security and fulfilment of contracts which are commonly accepted as normal incidents of human life by persons who have never thought of the infinite labour by which this system has been organised or its vital necessity in the present stage of human affairs.

But in spite of this training, or perhaps because of it, I see also that there are very definite bounds beyond which human law loses both its justification and its power. There are things about which it is not possible to legislate, and others about which legislation may and indeed ought to be defied. In principle, this is a matter on which every person would agree. For instance, if a Pagan lawgiver commands his Christian subjects to worship idols, we think it to be their duty to disobey. If a Catholic lawgiver commands his Protestant subjects to profess their belief in transubstantiation they should be prepared to suffer any punishment rather than obey the law; and, conversely, a sincere Catholic should refuse conformity to Protestant doctrines established and imposed by law. The early history of Christianity, of Protestantism, of Nonconformity, and the whole course of the struggles for freedom of thought, freedom of speech, and the free expression of political ideas would furnish innumerable illustrations of this principle, and in thinking of them we must remember that in their own day these rebels would not appear as they do now. The very fact that they were persecuted so cruelly shows that public opinion was against them almost



unanimously. They were misunderstood and misrepresented; falsely accused; their ideas distorted and caricatured; derided as fanatics and fools, as madmen, as enemies to society and persons whom it was dangerous to permit to live. Only after much struggle and suffering were these different classes of "non-conformists" able to establish their claim to be unrestrained by law. Slowly and most reluctantly the governing authorities gave way. In many instances there was a change in public opinion which restrained the enforcement of the penal laws, just as the statutes against blasphemy and Sunday trading are almost completely nullified to-day. In other cases the holders of certain opinions became so numerous and politically powerful that they were able to secure, first, a tacit suspension of the laws against them; then formal Acts of toleration for their opinions; and finally, complete emancipation and equality before the law. But it will be observed that governments never admit the broad principle that conscientious belief may be superior to law. They think that to admit such a contention would be to undermine their whole power. So they fight a continuous rearguard action, never recognising conscience in the abstract, but acquiescing in, tolerating and emancipating certain definite forms of conscientious belief which have become standardised and widely accepted in the course of years. That is why even in the most advanced communities there is no real freedom of conscience: in place of such freedom there is an assortment of Government patterns, of ready-made beliefs and doctrines from which the individual may

choose. Each civilized country has an extensive stock from which the great bulk of its inhabitants can be supplied. When there is sufficient demand new patterns will be added, but they will be added very reluctantly, and much discomfort may befall those who ask for them at the beginning. That is why I am writing these words in a prison cell, sitting on my well-scrubbed floor with paper and writing materials laid out on the plank bed, and what there is of the sunlight coming in through iron bars. My jailors know that I have a sincere objection to warfare; members of the Government which introduced conscription would probably admit it: certainly Members of Parliament with whom I have discussed the matter have done so without the slightest reserve. Then why am I here? Not because I have no conscientious objection but because my objection *has not been certified* in the official form. With a certificate I should be free—whatever my real views. Without a certificate I am a prisoner. The magistrate could not listen to my opinions: he must see a certificate. The officers who are to court-martial me will say that they have nothing to do with my views. No allowance will be made for beliefs as such: it is the certificate officialdom requires to see. The official attitude is not that persons who conscientiously object to warfare shall be exempted. No attempt is made to deal with those who are so opposed to the whole system that they cannot go before tribunals. No exemption is provided for those who have been before tribunals and have been refused through the ignorance or stupidity of those

before whom they have had to appear. The certificate is the thing.

\* \* \* \* \*

After this very long digression I must go back to the National Register taken on the 15th August, 1915. The official card was brought to me by the hall porter of the club where I was then living, and where in fact I had had a bedroom for some years. Seeing no objection to this demand of the authorities, I sat down and wrote that my name was James Scott Duckers, that I lived at the National Liberal Club, Whitehall Place, London, S.W.; that I practised as a solicitor at 27 Chancery Lane; was 32 years of age, unmarried and without anyone dependent upon me. Then came the last two questions about helping with the war. To these I replied collectively: "No. On principle I am opposed to war." This done, I gave the card back to the porter ready for the persons who would come to secure it for the national archives. No doubt he would read it: possibly he would show the form to others: I did not care. My views were well enough known in the club and I had long since overcome any difficulty which they caused. A year before it had been different. Persons with whom I had been associated in political work before the war would rudely stare or walk past without noticing me. Others would turn into doorways or go round side passages to avoid a meeting. During the closing days of July and the early days of August, 1914, the whole place became a sort of whirlpool of jingoism in which it was almost treason to speak a word of Liberalism or to remind



members that they were supposed to belong to a political party whose watchwords were: "Peace, Retrenchment and Reform." However, I soon found both there and elsewhere the persons who were rude and prejudiced enough to behave in this way. Some were obviously of foreign origin, and perhaps thought it necessary to seem ultra-British and violently patriotic. None were persons of any particular consequence. Men like Dr. Addison, the moving spirit of the Munitions Department, would always give me the same pleasant word and cheerful nod as when we were on political committees together before the war, and although its immediate political interest had gone the club remained as convenient a place to live and study in.

Extending from Whitehall Court to the Embankment, the National Liberal Club\* contains a number of fine and spacious public rooms, a splendid political library founded in memory of Mr. Gladstone, a magnificent winding marble staircase, and the usual conveniences of a large London club. On the higher floors are bedrooms for the use of members, and I had one fronting on to the Embankment, and occupied it right up to the day on which I was handed to the military authorities. From the double windows of this room one could look out at what I believe to be the finest view in any city in the world. Certainly there is nothing to equal it in Paris, Washington or Madrid. Some may give first place to the ocean traveller's first sight of New York, with its stupendous buildings springing from the water's edge. For

\* Since moved to the Westminster Palace Hotel,  
Victoria Street, S.W.

my own part I think that, search where you will, there is nothing to surpass the long curve of fine buildings from Westminster to Blackfriars. Taking the panorama from the other end, you see above the mist and smoke of the great city the lofty dome and turrets of St. Paul's. Several groups of large buildings lead the eye to the Temple with its gardens, the grey walls of Somerset House, the huge Savoy and Cecil Hotels, Adelphi Terrace and the gardens in front of it, the great group of clubs and residential flats forming Whitehall Court and on past various Government offices to the stately clock tower and Houses of Parliament at Westminster. It is beautiful in summer and in winter, in sunshine and in gloom, by day and by night: at all seasons and all times. Before the war its vista showed at night the sparkle of thousands of lighted windows, hundreds of brilliant electric standards in the street, an uncounted host of lighted vehicles swiftly passing along the Embankment and over the bridges, while great lighted tramcars passed and re-passed like giant shuttles weaving together the warp and woof of London life. Even now, when the lights are dim and the pleasure vehicles less frequent, it is glorious to look along this riverside, to see the water flowing as it has flowed for centuries, and then behind the great buildings to see the searchlights stretched across the sky.

That is why I never left the National Liberal Club but continued to spend my evenings in its great library, and on awaking, to look out each morning at the traffic on Waterloo Bridge and beyond it to

see if I could discern the golden cross upon St. Paul's.

After the National Register was taken the recruiting authorities took it in hand, and I received a circular from Lord Derby, but no canvassers ever called upon me, and I began to think that my card had been lost or that for some reason I was being disregarded by the military. However, in March, 1916, I received one day an official War Office form calling upon me to join the colours on March 24th. On reaching my office I wrote in the following terms:

D/G

10th March, 1916.

Sir,

In reply to Army Form W. 3236 (reference 37/15) sent to me at the National Liberal Club, I write to say that I do not admit that I am a member of the Army Reserve under the provisions of the Military Service Act. If it is desired to proceed further the question of liability should be submitted to a civil court.

I may add that, having been opposed on principle to war all my life and being convinced that Britain's entry into the present conflict was unnecessary and unjustifiable, I do not intend, in any circumstances, to render any form of military service.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) J. SCOTT DUCKERS.

Lt. \_\_\_\_\_,

Central London Recruiting Depôt,  
Whitehall, S.W.



This brought a reply from a major. He addressed me as "Private J. Scott Duckers" and proceeded:

13th March, 1916.

With reference to your letter dated 10th inst., in connection with your liability under the Military Service Act. Your intentions are noted, and your letter retained as evidence. In the meantime your attention is particularly drawn to the sections of the Army Act dealing with absentee soldiers and deserters.

(Signed) ———, Major,  
for R.O.,  
Westminster.

to which I replied:

D/G  
Sir,

16th March, 1916.

In reply to your communication of the 13th instant, I write to say that I am quite aware that there are penalties for refusal to undertake military duties. If and when the time comes for me to choose between incurring such penalties or abandoning my principles, I hope that I shall be able to make the proper choice.

In the meantime, the whole question of liability is disputed. This cannot be settled by the military authorities, but should be referred to a civil court. Until such court decides that I am under the Military Service Act I shall continue to think that I am exempt.

As you seem anxious to preserve evidence of my intentions, I enclose a series of leaflets in which some of my views are expressed.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) J. SCOTT DUCKERS.

Major \_\_\_\_\_,

Recruiting Office,

St. James' Vestry Hall,

Piccadilly, W.

Nothing more transpired, so I put my affairs more or less in order, made arrangements for my office to be closed and my business wound up in case I were taken, and sent a copy of this correspondence to a political friend, Mr. J. M. Hogge, M.P., with the request that if and when I fell into the hands of the military authorities he would, for the benefit of my relatives, try and find out what had become of me. This was intended to be done when I had actually disappeared, but probably I did not make this clear enough, because when travelling up in the train from Derbyshire I was surprised to find the following Parliamentary question and answer in the newspaper for April 5th:

#### PROCEEDINGS AGAINST SOLICITOR

Mr. HOGGE asked whether Mr. J. Scott Duckers, solicitor, of 27 Chancery Lane, W.C., was called to the colours on 24th March; whether he has been arrested, and, if so, where is he, and what action is being taken?

Mr. TENNANT: Yes, sir; he was called to the colours for 24th March. He has not been arrested. I cannot say to what proceedings he may render himself liable.

Still, even after this I was not arrested. On Saturday, April 8th, I attended a great Convention of the No-Conscription Fellowship at Devonshire House, and two or three newspapers commented on the fact that I was still free from arrest. I went on with my business and with meetings as usual until, on Tuesday, April 11th, on walking up the stairs to my office in Chancery Lane I saw two stalwart men in plain clothes, one of whom accosted me and asked if I were Mr. Scott Duckers. I said "Yes," and he then intimated that they would "like a word" with me. I knew what this meant, and leading the way into my private room, asked them to sit down and state their business. The spokesman opened a pocket-book and, showing me a card inside, said that he was a police-sergeant of the "G" Division, and that he wished to ask me some questions under the Military Service Act. I said that I declined to answer any questions and asked if he had a warrant for my arrest. He replied in the affirmative, and pulled a paper out of his pocket. All this was done very pleasantly and courteously by the officer, and, knowing that he was simply acting upon his instructions, I neither felt nor showed any resentment. I simply asked when they wished to take me before the magistrate, adding that I was just going to attend a case at Lambeth Police Court, and that one of the privileges of a solicitor was that he could not be



arrested while on the way to court for a client. The officer replied that he knew of the case at Lambeth but thought it was finished the day before, and in fact had kept the warrant back for a day so as not to interfere with it. I explained that the case had been adjourned, and eventually we arranged that one officer and I should go to Lambeth together in a taxi-cab, and that after finishing my case I should be taken to Bow Street and be brought up before the magistrate at two o'clock. As there was about half an hour to spare, I gave the sergeant a book to look at which had been presented to me some years before by his official chief, the Home Secretary. In this book, called *Liberalism—Its Principles and Proposals*, Mr. Herbert Samuel had demonstrated the evils and folly of conscription, the absurdity of Britain trying to be both a great naval and a great military power, and, while by no means adopting a "peace at any price" attitude, had written some very true and vivid things about the futility and horribleness of war. The sergeant was about to make some comment when I checked him with the story of another police officer who came to see me about the proceedings of the Stop-the-War Committee. I explained that we were issuing literature of a kind which every Liberal would have agreed with a couple of years before, and which had ample warrant in the book which Mr. Herbert Samuel had given me. The officer replied that when they got in the Cabinet people talked very differently. "You had better be careful," I said, using a well-known official phrase, "anything you say now may be used

in evidence against you! " The sergeant took the hint and held his peace.

While they were waiting I wrote a letter to my father, spoke on the telephone to my friend, Mr. C. H. Norman, sent for two or three persons to come and see me, emptied my pockets of a few things it was no use taking to gaol, and gave final instructions and said "Good-bye " to everyone in my office. A taxi was procured, and the sergeant and I were soon on our way to Lambeth Police Court. In the cab I had a good look at his warrant, which turned out to be a combined instruction to inquire and authority to arrest or do anything he thought necessary. It was directed to the chief of Vine Street Police Station and issued by the military authorities.

On arrival at Lambeth I told a number of friends what had happened, and then did the best I could to assist counsel in defending a member of the No-Conscription Fellowship named Berwick, who was ultimately fined 40s. by Mr. Chester Jones, the magistrate, and ordered to await a military escort.

Leaving there, I went with the sergeant to Bow Street Police Station for the purpose of being charged, but we found the police there would not have anything to do with us. It was not their job, and anyway the court was full that afternoon. We must go to Vine Street. The matter was argued at some length, but my sergeant could make no impression on them, and we walked through Long Acre, Leicester Square and Piccadilly Circus, past the Piccadilly Hotel, and then suddenly up a side turning into the Police Station at Vine Street. Here

they consented to take the charge, and a large sheet of yellow paper was produced, my name written upon it and the charge, which was that, being a member of the Special Reserve of His Majesty's Army, I had absented myself when called to the colours for permanent service. What had I to say? I said that I did not admit being under the Military Service Act. Down went this in the official notebook, together with the statement that I refused to answer any questions as to whether I was single or married.

The sergeant then asked if I would rather be brought up at Marlborough Street that afternoon or at Bow Street next day. I said, "Marlborough Street," provided I could let my office know. So I was taken to the police telephone and allowed to ring up with the information. The police also said they would send an officer to Bow Street to tell my friends to come on to the other court, but I do not think that was really done.

It was then one o'clock, so the sergeant and I went out to have some lunch together. I got a sandwich wrapped up to put in my pocket, as I was not sure when my next meal would be, and also had a wash in an underground convenience. Then we went on to Marlborough Street Police Court, where none of my friends could be seen because it was too early. I would have waited for them outside, but the sergeant asked me to "Come this way," and on going through a door, which I expected to lead into the court, I found myself in the back regions, a prisoner behind bolts and bars. Later, two professional



friends were allowed to see me for a few moments, but I remained shut off from everyone for perhaps half an hour, when I heard my name called, a door opened, and I was conducted into the court and put up in the dock. Miss Bellis, my Secretary, passed up some papers, but I could hardly tell who was in the court. What took place next is best told from the report of next day's *Morning Advertiser*, a London daily paper which is read chiefly in police stations and public houses, but which generally gives the best account of any proceedings affecting the criminal classes.

### MILITARY SERVICE ACT LONDON SOLICITOR ARRESTED

At Marlborough Street Police Court yesterday afternoon James Scott Duckers, solicitor, a prominent member of the No-Conscription and Stop-the-War movement, was charged before Mr. Denman with failing to report himself for military service. A large number of his friends, wearing badges bearing the words "Stop the war," assembled in the precincts of the court, but they were not permitted to be present during the hearing of the case. Mr. Scott Duckers has recently appeared on behalf of several conscientious objectors who have been before London magistrates.

Asked if he pleaded guilty, accused said, "I don't admit I am under the Act at all."

Police-sergeant Venables stated that about 11 o'clock that morning he went to 27 Chancery Lane, where he saw the prisoner, and asked him

if his name was James Scott Duckers. He replied "Yes; quite right." The witness said, "I want to put a few questions to you as to whether you attended or attested under the Military Service Act." The prisoner answered, "I decline to answer any questions." The witness told him that he was a police officer, and took him to Vine Street police station, where, in reply to the charge he said, "I don't admit I am liable."

THE CLERK: Did he give his age?

THE WITNESS: Yes, 35.

THE PRISONER: No, 33.

Did he state whether he was married or single?—He declined to answer any other questions.

THE MAGISTRATE: Whether he is liable or not would depend upon whether he is married or single?

THE WITNESS: Yes.

The prisoner questioned the witness as to the instructions he received from the military authorities. Quoting from an Army form, prisoner said that it was issued from the recruiting office, St. James' Vestry Hall, Piccadilly, and was addressed to the Chief Constable, Vine Street. It pointed out that a notice had been served on him (the prisoner) to join the colours on March 24th, and that as he had failed to report himself he was liable as an absentee. It requested the police to ascertain whether he had any satisfactory explanation for his absence. A paragraph in the notice stated that when the police came across a person who was alleged to be liable and who disputed his

liability under the Act they were to tell the man that it was desirable for him to communicate with the military authorities.

The witness said that these instructions were included in the notice, but the prisoner refused to answer his questions.

THE MAGISTRATE: Had you any other instructions except these?

THE WITNESS: No.

The magistrate, referring to the notice, remarked that it spoke for itself.

THE PRISONER (to the witness): When you found I was disputing my liability you took me into custody instead of proceeding by way of summons?

THE WITNESS: Yes, because you refused to answer my questions, and I had authority in that form to take you into custody.

The prisoner asked witness if he was familiar with a circular issued by the Home Office on March 9th, in which, he said, it was stated that in many cases proceedings would be taken by way of summonses to test the validity of claims of men who alleged they were not within the Act. Where such claims were made, the military authorities would ask for the police to take proceedings by way of summonses for desertion or absence without leave. "I want you to tell me," said the prisoner, "whether you had any instructions which prevented you from taking the course of issuing a summons against me."

THE WITNESS: My instructions were to arrest you if you did not give a satisfactory explanation.



You had verbal instructions apart from these printed instructions?—Yes.

Who from?—From the recruiting officer in charge.

Who is that?—Captain Vansattart.

Well, I cannot follow these foreign names. Is he an English officer?—I don't know.

What were they?—Papers were handed to me of a certain man who had been communicated with on several occasions and who refused to reply. Therefore he became liable.

So there was to be a departure from the ordinary course?—Oh, no.

THE PRISONER: Apart from the fact that you arrested me, I think you treated me very courteously.

Captain Vansattart, the recruiting officer in charge of the case, said that the prisoner was called up with Class 15 for March 24th. The accused was a single man, and as there had been no notice of appeal, the witness sent out the usual notice under the Military Service Act to the prisoner's address, which was given as the National Liberal Club. The prisoner replied stating that he did not admit that he was liable under the provisions of the Military Service Act, neither did he agree that the entry of England into the war was justifiable. After allowing him sixteen days' grace the witness gave the order for the prisoner to be arrested, as he had done in the case of many other men.

Asked if he could prove that the prisoner was

a single man, the witness said he could do so by his red card.

THE PRISONER: Have you the red card here?

THE WITNESS: No, it is for you to prove that you are a married man.

In reply to the prisoner, the witness said that he received a list of names, and among them was that of the prisoner. He gave instructions for certain circulars to be sent out. The prisoner did not come up in the Derby groups or other classes, and therefore he was placed in the conscriptive class. The names for that class were taken from the National Register.

The prisoner pointed out that his notice was signed by Lieut. Schweder, and turning to the witness he asked, "Is he an Englishman?"

THE WITNESS: Yes, he is in the Irish Guards.

Questioned about the book in which the prisoner's name appeared, the witness said that it was a regimental book.

THE PRISONER: You do not know whether I am liable under the Act or not, beyond the fact that you have got my name?

THE WITNESS: No.

THE MAGISTRATE (to the prisoner): If you say you were prejudiced in any way by being arrested instead of being summoned you can have a remand.

THE PRISONER: I am much obliged. I was taken somewhat unawares. Still, I submit there is no case made out by the prosecution.

THE MAGISTRATE: There is a *prima facie* case.

The prisoner was remanded on his own recognisances of £10 for seven days.

After this I went into a police room on the court premises, signed something in a book to the effect that I should forfeit £10 if I did not appear the following week, paid half-a-crown for the stamp on the recognisance, and was free once more. Outside the court were various friends who had not been able to get inside. A camera man photographed me with two or three of them when leaving the court, and when I got back to my office a newspaper seller was standing opposite with a poster bearing the words:

ARREST OF  
MR. SCOTT DUCKERS  
WESTMINSTER GAZETTE  
CITY EXTRA

For a week I was remanded, and for what took place when brought up again I will quote the *Daily Chronicle* report for April 19th:

STOP-THE-WAR MAN PASSED INTO ARMY  
SOLICITOR ESCORTED FROM COURT BY  
TWO GUARDSMEN

Mr. James Scott Duckers, the solicitor who has acted as chairman of the Stop-the-War Committee, was yesterday fined £2 by the Marlborough Street magistrate on a charge of failing to report under the Military Service Act, and passed into the Army.

When he arrived at the court Mr. Duckers was applauded by a large number of his supporters.

These included Lady Clare Annesley and Mr. J. M. Hogge, M.P., but they were not allowed to enter the court. He also received between 30 and 40 telegrams and letters from sympathisers, including Dr. Clifford, Rev. F. B. Meyer, and Rev. Thomas Phillips, president of the Baptist Union.

In his defence Mr. Duckers said he had endeavoured to make the point that the onus of proving he was under the Military Service Act was upon the prosecution.

MR. DENMAN: Put in one word, it means you are a person who claims to be a conscientious objector, so far as that term can be construed?

DEFENDANT: Quite so.

Mr. Denman, giving his decision, said that he could not put himself on the footing of a person who told him all kinds of things about his views. He could not enter into them. Defendant had behaved, so far as his appearance in that court had gone, with every courtesy and decorum. It was clear that the case was one for summary jurisdiction, and defendant would be fined £2, and ordered to await a military escort.

Mr. Duckers thanked the magistrate, and said: I don't see that you could do anything else. It remains for me to make my stand when I am in the hands of the military authorities, which I hope to do.

When the decision became known to Mr. Duckers' sympathisers there were cries of "Shame." A disturbance followed, and an arrest was made. The



crowd waited in the hope of seeing Mr. Duckers taken away by the escort, but he left by a back entrance in charge of two Guardsmen.

At this point it may be convenient to deal with a question asked by the magistrate and by other persons more or less sympathetic towards an objector's general standpoint. It is, "Why did you not go before a tribunal? Why did you not avail yourself of the machinery provided by Parliament for cases like yours? Surely it would have been easy for you to have shown by undeniable proofs that you had held certain views for many years, and so secured a certificate of exemption and been free from this difficulty."

The answer does not depend on the competency or conduct of the tribunals. I had formed my view before the first case had been dealt with. The answer would have been the same if every member of every tribunal had been a model of fairness and courtesy, and if every conscientious objector had been given a certificate of complete exemption. But it is worth while to note that in the final result matters would probably have been the same. Except in the unlikely event of complete exemption being granted (and not afterwards taken away on appeal), the certificate would have been of no use to me. I am not prepared to join the military organisation as a non-combatant or as a hospital orderly. Neither can I join a body like the Friends' Ambulance, which more or less assists the military—sometimes at any rate. Even to agree to do "work of national importance" would go against my principles, because

the only purpose which the Government could have in transferring me to another occupation (or in requiring me to remain in my own) would be that in their view I should be then most useful in helping to carry on the war. Being against the war, I do not want it to continue. I want the war to be stopped, and will not voluntarily do anything at all to further the campaign.

Still, what does "going before the tribunal" mean? My office is within the district of Holborn. The local tribunal there consists of a number of more or less elderly gentlemen, probably all quite sincere and well-meaning in their individual capacities, but collectively, as a tribunal, blind to everything for which a conscientious opinion stands. The only name I have heard as that of a member of the tribunal was the name of Mr. A. W. G——, the head of a large department store near Holborn Bars. My informant may have been mistaken, or Mr. G—— may have been a conspicuously shining example of the tribunal member in his finest phase. He may have had nothing to do with the extraordinary proceedings (referred to in Parliament by Mr. Snowden) when the tribunal, having exhausted the "What-would-you-do-if-you-saw-a-German-soldier" type of query, wanted to know what a man did with his evenings, when he went to bed, when he got up in the morning, how often he had a bath, and other questions of a similar kind. As I say, assume that Mr. G—— had nothing whatever to do with this. In fact, leave the individual Mr. G—— out of the matter entirely; let me just use the name as typical

of a more or less self-made successful business man likely to be put upon a tribunal—as a generic word, just as Croesus or Rothschild may be used to denote a wealthy man. What “going before the tribunal” means, in essence, is “Go before Mr. G——.” See him—not as a customer in his shop when he is anxious to oblige you, not on the friendly footing of a business equal, not in any of the open-hearted intimacies of his private life—see him on a tribunal. See him seated at a table in the public view, dressed in a little brief authority and accompanied by all the petty pomp and circumstance with which borough officials freeze human souls. Explain to him what it is almost impossible for any human being to explain. Satisfy him about something which he entirely fails to understand. Answer every silly question, put up with every foolish gibe. If Mr. G—— will exempt you, that will be sufficient. If he refuses, you will be seized upon and ground up inside the military machine. Parliament has handed everything over to Mr. G——, subject only to the right of appeal to a tribunal of super-G——’s in case either the objector or the military representative is not satisfied.

And you must go before him in one of two capacities, either as an attested man or as a conscript. You must, by implication, admit his jurisdiction and the absurd fiction by which Parliament has “deemed” you to be a soldier, and ask for a certificate releasing you from military obligations and military oaths you are supposed to have accepted and sworn. If you say, “I am not a soldier, and I will never be,”

Mr. G—— cannot help you in the slightest degree. Parliament has only legislated for a particular type of objection, and if you do not fit the official pattern there is no exemption available.

I must now go back in my mind to Marlborough Street and the events immediately following the trial.

The police took me from the dock to a sort of prisoner's waiting-room, where I sat down feeling very much exhausted, a bad cold and a sore throat having oppressed me in court, and with a general sense of not having said what I wanted to say—the sort of feeling which used to be common when I started public speaking—the mind filled with a flood of fine things one might have uttered or were prepared beforehand, but which somehow were forgotten at the time. While trying to assure myself that this did not matter and was no use troubling over, a legal friend who had been watching the proceedings came in to ask if I wished the magistrate to state a case for appeal on the legal point about trial by jury, because probably he would do so and meantime release me on bail. I said, “No, the suspense and bother would be far more wearying than going through with the whole thing now. Even if I were to succeed on appeal I should simply have to stand my trial again.” So I thanked him and decided to go at once with the military. My father, who had travelled up specially from the North to attend the trial, was allowed to come in after that, and a constable went outside to fetch me some tea. So far from being disappointed, my father seemed pleased with what I had said in court, assured me that things



could not have been done better in the circumstances, that everyone said it was a very exceptional thing to get a special remark from the magistrate, and that if he had been liable to the Military Service Act he would have felt bound to have taken the same line. After about twenty minutes the escort arrived and, bidding my father good-bye—I knew not for how long—I was conducted through some passages, out by a side door into a narrow lane leading up to Oxford Street, the main thoroughfare. Here a taxi was hailed; one soldier and I sat down inside, another soldier accommodated himself on a folding seat with his back to the driver. Sergeant —— gave the direction, and we turned down Regent Street towards the recruiting station at Scotland Yard. There was just enough rain to brighten the atmosphere, and I thought the streets of London never looked more vivid than as we drove through Piccadilly Circus, down the lower part of Regent Street, past the Crimean War Memorial where John Bright, standing with a little boy who asked what C-R-I-M-E-A meant, answered, "A Crime"; through Waterloo Place and Trafalgar Square, where I was to have spoken the following Sunday at a Stop-the-War demonstration, to prohibit which the Home Secretary had to call a special meeting of the Privy Council and issue the Proclamation in a special supplement to the *London Gazette* (they can move promptly when they like, these official personages); round by King Charles' statue, which was sold for old metal during the Commonwealth; and, after a brief view of the broad vista of Parliament Street,

round again into the Old Scotland Yard where the Kings of Scotland lived in times gone by.

Stepping out of the taxi, I went up into a building with a large glass-covered courtyard like a railway station, and numbers of soldiers standing or walking about in all directions. The escort took me across the courtyard into a small office, where I saw a fine, alert, soldierly-looking man with a wide stretch of ribbons across his breast. "Well, sir," he said, "you've been through the police court. Now it's my duty to make you a soldier." "And I think it my duty to refuse to be one," I replied. "Oh, we'll see about that," he rejoined pleasantly. "I've had some thousands through my hands, and they've all settled down quietly in the end. Now then, let me see," he continued, turning to a book on the desk, "I shall want your full name and address, and—" "I decline to give any information," I said. The Sergeant-Major paused with the pen in his hand, and just then a pleasant-faced, young-looking officer came into the room. "Look here, Mr. Duckers," he began very courteously, "I quite understand the way you look at things, but it's no good being awkward now. You've made your protest, you've done all you can, but you're in the Army, and I can tell you it will be very, *very* unpleasant for you if you make useless trouble. Don't you think you can bring yourself to take things reasonably now. If so, I'm sure you'll enjoy the life and get on very well." I replied that I did not wish to appear ill-natured or discourteous to anyone, but he might as well understand clearly that I had no

intention of rendering any military service or recognising any military authority. "Very well, then," he remarked, "you'll only have yourself to blame"—and, turning to the Sergeant-Major, "Take him to be attested." We crossed the courtyard again to the opposite corner, to a place where some men in plain clothes with badges were filling up blue forms. A small group of recruits stood in front, but the Sergeant-Major pushed me forward out of my turn. "Take this one first," he said. The man at the table reached for a fresh form, dipped his pen in the ink and began, "Your full name?" "I don't know why I should have to go through all this again," I said rather crossly to the Sergeant-Major, "please understand that I mean what I say and will not give any particulars at all." The man at the table laid down his pen. "Well, if he won't tell me anything I can't put it down, can I?" he observed. This seemed so obvious that the Sergeant-Major and I marched back again across the courtyard to a captain, where my conduct was reported. "Never mind," said he, "we can get all the particulars from the recruiting office in Piccadilly, and whether he signs the paper or not doesn't matter at all. Take him to be examined," and just as we were leaving the office he added quietly, "Take him through as a special case—not with the ordinary lot." Then we went upstairs, into a room where there were a number of men in black coats—presumably doctors—and into a sort of cubicle, where I was told to undress for the medical officer, and left for a little while. Being exceedingly tired,

I simply sat down, took off my hat, put my feet up on the seat, and awaited developments. There was not long to wait. About a dozen persons came in one after another to persuade me to take off my things. They said that no one else had ever objected at this stage. It was not really an Army order because I had not yet been accepted as a soldier and was still a civilian. I said, "Then if I'm a civilian, what right have you to detain me here?" No answer being forthcoming to this, they tried a different tack. I was not looking well; very probably I was not strong enough for the Army. If so and I were rejected on examination the whole thing would be at an end. If I were to pass the medical officer I could still take up my stand against military orders when I reached the barracks; my position would not have been compromised in the least by this slight examination. After a time I refused to argue with any new men and referred them to the officer I had seen at the beginning and to whom I had stated my position. At this they professed to lose patience with me. I was in the Army, they said. In the Army, if a man refused to obey an order, force was employed. They would be sorry to take any drastic measures. Still, if I really persisted in refusing I must come this way. Then they marched me up more stairs and along corridors to another set of cubicles. I was put in one and an Irish soldier set to guard me there. I quite expected two or three men to come and pull my clothes off by force, so I said to one of the officers, "If you think you're entitled to have me stripped by force, give the



order and bring your men in." "No," he said, *we're not going to do anything illegal.*" "Oh," I thought, "then this is simply bluff all the time," and I began to go over the exact words which had been used, and found that while undoubtedly the impression they intended to convey was that force could and would be employed, there was nothing I could fasten on as a distinct threat to this effect. They had run as nearly as possible to the border line. (I was told afterwards, whether truly or not I cannot say, that after the publication of photos of Eric Chappelow in a blanket, an Army order was issued strictly forbidding any violence to objectors in future, and that these people had in addition been given special instructions not to give any chance for complaint with regard to me.) Anyhow, no violence *was* used in my case, but I went up and down more stairs and corridors to see the chief recruiting officer. I did not catch his name properly, but he was a very fine pleasant man, wore a red and brass hat, which I was told afterwards would denote a Brigadier-General, and had red lapels like luggage labels. He said, without any kind of threat, that he thought it would be much wiser for me to do as the medical officer desired. I must understand that I was under military law, and that orders had to be obeyed. I replied that I did not admit that I was under military law; that I had never been attested and that under Section 100 of the Army Act, where a recruit said he had not been attested the matter should be reported to the Army Council for decision. He waved this aside, and the interview was at an end.

The Sergeant-Major took me back to the doctors, and an officer went through a sort of ritual—cautioning me that I was deemed to be under military law, that under military law severe punishment could be awarded for disobedience to orders, and that he, as my superior officer, ordered me to submit to medical examination. In face of that, did I refuse? I did.

“TAKE HIM AWAY AND PREPARE THE CHARGE.”

After these dread words I was taken back to the office in which I had gone when first entering the building. A Special Army Charge Sheet was obtained and the particulars of my crime were written down, with a “Now-you’re-in-for-it” sort of air, by the three or four clerks it took to make the charge out in proper form. Then we toiled back to the Chief Recruiting Officer’s room and waited what seemed an interminable time. Perhaps it was half an hour in reality, but at the end of the wait the proceedings began. The officer sat down with his red hat on, and the charge was spread out on the table in front. I stood before him with the Sergeant-Major at my side. Colonel M——stepped forward and saluted. At such a time and place he had seen the accused. A certain order was given and deliberately disobeyed. Colonel M——saluted again and retired. Captain C—— stepped forward and saluted. He was present at such a time and place when the last witness ordered the accused to do so and so, and he deliberately disobeyed. Captain C——saluted and retired. *What had I to say?* I had to say that I did not admit I was under military law

and wished to be legally defended. "Remanded!" said the officer, and I was taken away. Down the stairs, across the courtyard (I knew the building only too well by this time) to the guardroom, where I gave up my umbrella but was not searched, the Sergeant-Major saying it was not necessary, told I was "under close arrest," and then, after having had well over two hours' badgering about in one place and another, put into a loathsome, stinking dungeon.

Having given proper credit, I hope, for the respects in which the treatment was better than my expectation, I have no hesitation in writing frankly about the detention cell at Old Scotland Yard. It was an abominable, disgraceful place, unfit for occupation by any human soul. Structurally, the room was not so bad. In length it would be about thirty feet, in width fifteen feet, and twelve feet or more in height. The walls were of white glazed brick, the floor of concrete or asphalt—I could not discover which—and there was a window about six feet high at each end. In the middle of the ceiling was a single incandescent electric lamp protected by strong wire guards—presumably against boots or other objects which prisoners might throw. One of the windows (which seemed to front on to a passage or yard outside) had been covered with corrugated iron to within about eighteen inches of the top, and the glass above the iron was so dirty that it admitted about as much light as a sheet of brown paper might have done. The other window, which was well protected with expanded metal netting and heavy

bars, opened on to the glass-covered courtyard, and through it a certain amount of daylight and fresh air came. The sun could not shine in anywhere, and even at noonday it was necessary for the artificial light to be kept on. The door leading from the guardroom opened at the end of the long walls, and the wall opposite had a fixed wooden seat running from end to end. Along the remainder of the other wall were ranged four folding plank beds (one so much broken as to be quite useless), and a filthy, corroded bucket three parts full of urine. This was the only convenience in the place, and the floor round about it was in a very objectionable condition. The bucket was not in the far corner, but in between the beds on the one hand and the door on the other, through a hole in which the guard peeped at us when necessary and our food was passed in. The whole place smelt abominably, and the floor was used as a general spittoon.

"There's another of your sort there already," said the guard as he let me into the cell, and, peering into the semi-darkness, I saw a man sitting on the seat opposite the doorway munching a thick piece of bread. In a group at the other end were two dejected-looking young soldiers in khaki and two ordinary conscripts whose previous occupation might have been selling bootlaces in the streets. I sat down on the seat next to the man with the bread, the door closed, and the group, after staring at my silk hat and black coat (for I was wearing my ordinary working clothes as a London solicitor), resumed their conversation and the furtive smoking of bits of



cigarettes. Entering into conversation with my neighbour, I found that he did not belong to any anti-conscription organisation and had not objected to the medical examination. He had been passed as fit for general service, and expected to be sent to Winchester. Having a letter-card in my pocket, I then wrote a brief note to my mother telling her how I was getting on, and, adding my companion's name and home address, asked her to let his people know that he was there too. I had hardly finished this when the door opened suddenly, my companion was called out, and I never saw him any more. The guard then asked if I would like something to eat from the canteen. I should, indeed. What could I have? "Oh, anything." The "anything" turned out to be anything except what I asked for, but eventually I was provided with a mug of tea (containing nearly a quart, I should think), three slices of bread and butter an inch thick and a great plateful of cold beef. Price sixpence. No letters could be sent, they said, but a message could go to my office for someone to bring more appropriate clothes. While this was being done I shared out some of the surplus beef with my fellow-prisoners and made the best meal I could in the circumstances.

An hour or so afterwards they brought a soft felt hat and rainproof coat which had come from my office, and I handed over my other hat and overcoat, leaving the letter-card in an inside pocket where it would probably be found and posted by someone. Afterwards I heard that the contraband was not discovered until the coat arrived in friendly hands.

The soldiers outside in the guardroom occupied the early part of the evening in peeping through the door at me in amused groups, but they were not offensive in any way—in fact, I never had the slightest discourtesy from any private soldier either in London or afterwards. Later they brought two blankets apiece and told us to turn in for the night. Seeing the blankets, one of my fellow-prisoners said, "This is because you're here. We didn't have blankets last night." I asked the guard if that were so, but he replied that he could not say. There was a new guard every twenty-four hours. He added that the rule was two blankets each in winter but nothing in summer. Whether April was in winter or summer he did not know.

Just as we were getting our things arranged another soldier-prisoner—rather drunk, I should think,—was pushed violently through the doorway, and throwing himself face downward on the seat snuggled under his loose Army overcoat like a tortoise under its shell and began to snore almost immediately. The other prisoners took his blankets as well and huddled together—the four all together on the three serviceable beds. I took off my boots, wrapped them in one blanket which I used as a pillow, and, covering myself up with the other blanket, lay down at one end of the seat on which the last comer was snoring. The Army blankets, I should say, were all of heavy dark woollen material in different colours from blue to brown and as big as carriage rugs. The soldiers said they were infested with fleas, but I never came across any which were not quite clean.

For about a couple of hours two of my fellow-prisoners occupied themselves in relating their adventures with women—entering into every variety of obscene detail—and their own marvellous exploits in evading the military police. After they dropped asleep I lay listening to the mechanical march of a sentry in the courtyard and thinking how differently I had been housed the night before hardly a stone's throw away.

Morning came at last. The guard collected our blankets, and I was asked if I would like a wash. A corporal then conducted me to a very good lavatory, found a clean towel and soap, and I came back feeling much invigorated and refreshed. "Come along, you fellows," he said to the other prisoners, and they were taken off in a bunch. When the prisoners came back one soldier was told to take the bucket out and another given a sweeping brush, with which he attacked the floor with much energy, using a kind of rhythmic movement. Two sudden sweeps and a halt; then a tremendous bang of the brush on the floor and two more sweeps. This, I learned, was the Army method, but I could not understand that it achieved much except filling the whole cell with choking dust. The bucket was brought back with some water in it, and by means of a stick with a lump of woollen stuff at the end the water was dabbed over the floor, and it collected in puddles. It was now breakfast time, and while the other prisoners were brought three lumps of bread and butter and a mug of tea each, someone asked what I would like to order from the canteen. I said that I would

have what prisoners usually had. The reply was that as I had money in my possession I must pay for my meals and have them brought from the canteen. "Oh, no," I said, "if I'm to be kept here someone will have to provide my food. I won't pay for anything at all." The Sergeant-Major was sent for, and his explanation was that I was not entitled to food until I became a soldier. I pointed out that it was on the theory that I was a soldier that I was being detained, and he said he meant a soldier in camp. Before going to camp I must pay for my own food or starve. So I said I would starve, and making my gloves and muffler up into a sort of pillow, lay down on the seat again. "Stick it out," said one of the soldiers. "If your King and country need you, they can blasphemously feed you" (or words to that effect). I remained lying still on the seat, and, after coming two or three times to see if I had changed my mind, my custodians brought a regulation breakfast free of charge. The same sort of thing took place at dinner-time, but they did not hold out so long.

Late in the morning I was taken out to see my father in the Sergeant-Major's office. The captain was there, and said that such an interview was an exceedingly special thing, and must take place in his presence and that of the Sergeant-Major. I then told my father what had taken place much as I have written it out here, except that I did not say anything about smuggling the letter-card. When I came to speak about the condition of the cell, the captain wanted to stop me, but I said that I



was going to complain of it some time, and they might as well know then what I was intending to say, so that the authorities could be ready to disprove anything they thought exaggerated or untrue. On this he let me continue, and I went on with my story to the end.

Having said "Good-bye" again to my father I went back to the cell, and before long two rather grand officers came—middle-aged men with plenty of ribbons and things. I asked if this were the time to make complaints, and proceeded to say my say about (1) the bucket and general unsanitary condition of the place, and (2) the attempt to charge me for the food. The officers listened without saying a solitary word; then one went to each of the other prisoners and said, "Any complaints?" "No, sir," was each reply, and the officers went out.

I asked the soldiers if anything would be done about my complaints, or if that was the end of everything. As they had never heard of anybody venturing to make a complaint before, they really did not know, but thought someone would have to make a report or do something of that sort. However, I heard nothing more on the subject.

I remained in the cell until after five that day, and meanwhile various persons came in or were taken away. When the key turned in the door, every man was alert. It might be a new prisoner, or it might be a summons for him to go away. Most of the soldiers were absentees awaiting escorts, some had just been hauled out of brothels; one deserter was,

according to his own story, in such a state of syphilitic disease that he would be sent into hospital immediately: all cursed the Army most vociferously. I heard more seditious talk in the twenty-four hours spent in that cell than probably I have heard altogether since the war began. But of course these men could not be fair samples, I told myself. They were men up against the authorities, deserters and absentees, loose livers and notorious characters. If any substantial percentage of the Army felt like these men, it would be impossible to continue with the war. How far this opinion was confirmed or modified in the next week or two will be related afterwards.

Just when there was some rumour of tea appearing—meals form the most agreeable events in prison routine—the door opened and I was called out by the Sergeant-Major and taken to his room. The captain also was there, and he asked if I would now undergo the medical examination. I refused. “Well, Duckers,” he said (none of your *Misters*, now), “as you won’t be examined it has been decided that you are to be deemed to be fit for general service. You will go at once to the Rifle Brigade at Winchester. The train leaves at 5-55.” “‘Deemed’ again,” I thought, but thanked him for his personal courtesy and waited while all sorts of forms were made out relating to me. A military policeman came, was given quite a bundle of decent-sized papers referring to myself and my crimes, and took me out to an Army car in the yard. The Sergeant-Major slammed the door, and we were off at once towards

Waterloo. My custodian had no objection to tea in the train, so on reaching the station I told a porter to fetch a double tea-basket and all the evening papers he could find. Meanwhile, we went to the booking office, exchanged one of the papers for third class tickets to Winchester, and, though a non-smoker myself, I bought two packets of cigarettes—one for the military policeman and another which I thought might be useful for someone later on. In the train I wrote a couple of letters, read about the arrest and first appearance at Bow Street of my friend Mr. C. H. Norman, found that my guide had never been to Winchester before and knew nothing about the place, and after stopping at all sorts of stations and peering round the edges of the blinds we arrived quite unexpectedly at one where the lamps were labelled "Winchester." Here we alighted, I for my part wondering what Fate now had in store.

It was quite dark at Winchester, and, after posting my letters on the station, the military policeman and I did our best to find the Barracks of the Rifle Brigade. In fact, we went rather a long way round, but after some walking reached iron gates with a sort of lodge just inside, where some soldiers were sitting before a fire. I was handed over with my papers and a receipt obtained. My guide then went back to London, and I was taken to the Recruits Reception Room. Here I was most kindly received by the Sergeant and Corporal in charge, taken across to a large meal room to have some supper, provided with a good bed in a sort of dormitory with a comfortable pillow and clothes. On the walls hung

some Landseer engravings: "Dignity and Impudence," "The Challenge," "The Sanctuary," "Time of War," and "Time of Peace." I was put to sleep just under the picture of "Time of Peace." Thinking that my clothes would disappear in the night, I only took off my coat, waistcoat and boots, while the coat I folded up and put under the bed clothes. Seeing that I was doing this the Corporal came and said that I need have no fear about my clothes; they would be quite safe. I could take his word for it. I replied that no doubt as far as he was concerned they would be all right, but I did not know who might come in, and I should sleep much more comfortably as I was. Then the Sergeant came and said much the same thing, but I persisted in sleeping as I was and they let me alone.

Next morning (Thursday) I was awakened by bugle calls. Previously my impression was that in the Army people had to get up at the first sound, but three or four calls were sounded before my companions took any notice. Then they all got up very suddenly. I went to a lavatory to wash, obtained some warm water and had a shave, finished dressing and then went with the Corporal across to the large meal room where I had been the night before. I do not know how many men it could accommodate at once—perhaps seven or eight hundred. If seated for a public meeting probably room could be found for close upon two thousand. There were three sittings as a rule, and ours was the first. Presently I was equipped with a mug of tea, a large plate of tinned salmon, bread and butter and marmalade. At



another table I saw a number of new-comers in civilian clothes (including one man—not the conscientious objector—who had been in the cell at Scotland Yard). We were at a small table with some ordinary soldiers, who seemed to be very decent fellows indeed. After breakfast I bought some papers from a newsboy and sat for some time before a fire in the Recruits Reception Room. At length a Sergeant came to fetch me away. I went with him across the parade ground, admiring the fine Georgian-looking brick and white stone buildings of the barracks, and reached the dormitory of No. 1 Company of the Rifle Brigade. Here I was handed over to another Sergeant and made very welcome, told that this would be my bed near his, given a pile of blankets and other articles, and then spent an hour or so talking to a group of soldiers before another fire. No one seemed to have any work to do. They all looked as though they ate well and slept well, yet everyone said he wished the war were at an end. Some added that on no account would they ever join the Army again. They did not give any reasoned opinion. "Fed up with it" was the phrase.

After this I was fetched before an officer—the first I had seen in Winchester—and put through a performance about the attestation form, ending by going back to the dormitory under arrest and resuming the conversation before the fire. No one expressed the slightest contempt or hostility for my views or bothered about me being under arrest. They just went on as before. Later I was marched

off to the Quartermaster's Store, and waited until the officer I had seen already arrived.

Here there was no fuss or intimidation. He just went through the ritual which I was getting so accustomed to. Did I know that I was under military law? Was I aware of the consequences of disobeying orders? Would I take off my clothes and put on that uniform? No? Then I must go to the cells.

So instead of going back to the dormitory with the special bed and the conversational soldiers I went off to the guardroom near the gate where I had come in the night before, and was handed over to the Sergeant of the Guard.

The first thing was to know what I had in my possession. I preferred to be searched, so he searched me very thoroughly but not unpleasantly, and the guardroom looked on interestedly while my belongings were brought to light. I was allowed to keep my gloves, muffler, two handkerchiefs, some throat lozenges and a toothpick. My watch and chain, fountain pen, a book I was reading, my penknife and money were all taken from me with other odds and ends. A careful inventory was made of the articles to be put away, but I asked to be allowed to leave the matches, cigarettes and chocolate for the use and behoof of the guardroom, which was probably considered to be the proper thing. Then, feeling rather strange without anything in my pockets, I was taken to a very nice clean, bright cell. It was about ten feet broad, twelve feet long and another twelve feet high. Hot water pipes ran

along one side, there was a good-sized window with thick glass set in iron bars like a pavement light on end, an iron-covered door with tremendous lock, a wooden parquet floor and a plank bed—both scrubbed like a butcher's board. No musty stuffiness or anything of that kind.

I had hardly got inside the cell when an orderly officer came round on the daily inspection. He said that I might write to my father immediately, and also have some shirts and things sent from London. Books and newspapers were not allowed.

I wrote my letter straight away, and then someone brought a tremendous dinner of good meat, well cooked and with suitable vegetables. Next day being Good Friday, I asked if I might attend the Wesleyan service, and the Sergeant said he would see what could be done. Later on I had tea, consisting of a quart mug (or at any rate a very liberal pint) of that beverage with bread, butter and watercress. For supper there was a mug of excellent thick soup, and, wrapped up in four Army blankets, I soon had a good night's sleep. Having gone through the uniform business I felt quite safe in undressing properly, especially as if anyone did come to take my own clothes I could wrap myself up in the blankets and remain quite comfortably in my cell. However, no one tried to take them, and I should have been quite safe in accepting the assurance of the Sergeant and Corporal at the Recruits Receiving Office the night before. My military knowledge was increasing now, so much that I knew a private was a soldier without anything distinctive on his arm—

except perhaps crossed rifles (meaning first-class shot) or flags (meaning signaller), or a sort of red shuttlecock (meaning bomb thrower). The next step was lance-corporal (one stripe). Then corporal (two stripes), and sergeant (three stripes). Corporals and sergeants seemed to be the only persons allowed any initiative of their own.

On Good Friday morning I began the routine which was followed very closely during succeeding days. Rise at 6 a.m. Fold blankets ready for soldiers to take away for the day. Get towel and soap ready to go out and wash in the yard. Go back to cell and finish dressing. Then wait for breakfast to be handed in. After breakfast and another wait the cell door is unlocked and a sweeping brush and pail of water are handed in. Sweep out cell, and then scrub plank bed and floor. By this time the prisoner is generally wanted in the orderly room or marched off to the bath-house or to exercise. As a rule I had to go to the orderly room every day—generally simply to go before the Commanding Officer and be remanded to District Court-Martial to be held at some indefinite future time. The exercise times were half an hour each in the morning and evening, but the morning exercise often had to give way to other things. The baths came every other day, and there was a good supply of hot water, and the bath-house—which consisted of a long row of separate baths in cubicles—was a decent clean place well looked after.

For dinner there was a choice of two or three meat dishes from a printed menu, and one pudding;



tea and supper followed later in the day, blankets came in about 7 p.m. and lights went out by eight o'clock. Such was the prison day. In winter the routine might have been very trying in some respects, but there was nothing to grumble at in April or May. The food was good, abundant and well varied throughout the week, no two meals being exactly alike.

The Medical Officer came round every morning, and having a sore throat I was ordered medicine three times a day. This provided a series of pleasant little trips to the medical department while it lasted, but I was soon quite well again. My first disappointment with the Winchester people was that they would not let me go to service on Good Friday or Easter Monday. The Wesleyan Chaplain did what he could for me, but the official story seemed to be at different times: (1) Prisoners awaiting trial did not attend services; (2) the old business about me not being a soldier yet and therefore not entitled to soldiers' privileges; (3) to have anyone not in khaki would spoil the look of the parade; (4) such a case was not contemplated by the regulations. The Chaplain said he thought points 1, 2 and 4 would be waived if for that occasion only I would put on uniform.

The next grievance was that although the orderly officer allowed me to write for clean shirts and things the Adjutant would not allow me to have them. It was "contrary to regulations," he said. If I wanted clean things I must wear military ones. I grumbled a good deal about this, but without success.

Apparently the Adjutant is the supreme arbiter and overrules everyone else. So when I found it was no good complaining, my things developed a habit of dropping in the bath and having to be dried and aired in the guardroom yard. Starting with handkerchiefs, I advanced to socks and ended up by washing my shirt and collar in sufficiently satisfactory style. The collar was very limp at first, but I found it possible to make a hole in the linen and push bits of cardboard inside.

Having been charged with No. 2 crime (refusing to put on uniform), and had the evidence taken in my presence, I borrowed a copy of the *Manual of Military Law* to read up about courts-martial and such things. It is an instructive and, in parts, highly amusing book, and occupied me for many hours. I also secured a Bible, with the Church Hymnary bound up in it, as well as the Scotch Metrical Version of the Psalms, so the lack of books and papers was made up in some degree. Letters arrived frequently, and there was no formality beyond a regulation that I had to open them in the presence of one of the guard. I think this was to prevent tobacco and things like that being smuggled in. No one tried to read my letters. Discipline was satisfied if I opened the envelope and took the letter out while the guard was looking. Afterwards I read the letter by myself. For outward letters there was much more fuss. I was never refused permission to write, but a request had to be sent up to the orderly room specially by the Sergeant, the letter left open and sent to be censored, and sometimes there was delay.

My fellow-prisoners were mostly soldiers awaiting trial for desertion and such like, but two (Berwick and Parker) were in the same case as myself. I hoped to be tried at the same time, but they were court-martialled on Tuesday, May 2nd, and sentenced to 112 days' detention apiece. Great precautions were taken to prevent us speaking to one another, but we had opportunities of exchanging a friendly nod. They always seemed to be bearing up well and in good spirits. One was allowed vegetarian food. I was told that the man I saw in London had given in.

The jailors and guardsmen were, without exception, thoroughly kind, good-natured fellows. They never relaxed their vigilance or permitted any breach of regulations, but there is a world of difference between the same set of rules carried out as pleasantly as they did and as harshly and offensively as some persons might have done. Therefore, on the whole, things were much less irksome than I anticipated. There was plenty of time for rest and meditation—for thinking over problems which I had had unsettled for some time—or carrying my mind out in fancy to other periods and other climes—making mental catalogues of people who had been in prison in different ages; who had been burnt and beheaded and tortured and killed—thinking of Winchester as it may have been when Alfred the Great was king, and again as it may be perhaps in fifteen or twenty years' time. I would picture the American tourist coming with Baedeker or its successor—some

little red handbook of the things to see—and look over his shoulder at an entry like this:

WINCHESTER.—Once the capital of England, now a moderate-sized market town. Principal objects of interest: Ruins of ancient Cathedral (destroyed by aircraft, 1925); monument to King Alfred the Great in Market Square; and Hohenzollern House. This imposing residence (with estates in Cornwall, Yorkshire, Ireland and the Scottish Highlands as well as an annuity of £500,000 a year) was settled on the Hohenzollern family in perpetuity by the treaty of Ottawa in 1927. State Apartments may be viewed when Imperial family not in residence. Visitors should also see the old guardroom cells (shilling tip expected), where at different times 5293 conscientious objectors to military service are said to have been confined during the early part of the Thirteen Years War (commenced 1914).

My chief minor trouble was the lack of tamable mice or spiders. Of mice there could be none, because when I put cheese on the floor not even a nibble was forthcoming. There *was* a spider, but it remained impervious to my overtures. I needed a book like *Wild Nature Tamed by Kindness* in order to discover how to cultivate the acquaintance of spiders. Perhaps it was not the right kind. I needed a well-bred, courtly French spider of the true Bastille breed, or a pushing, energetic Scotch spider like the one from which King Robert the Bruce learned his lesson so well. My spider was an English spider, I think—one which regarded its cobweb as its castle, disdained all outsiders and lived comfortably on the unearned increment of hapless flies.



Anyway, it remained up in one of the corners and would not condescend to notice me in any way.

It will be seen that prison life is not all absolute misery—many an incident has its comic side. One which I thought over many times afterwards took place shortly after I was first put in the cells. When we were standing up for the orderly officer one day, a prisoner was discovered with rather untidy hair. "Wotjer mean by 'aving yer 'air like that fer the awdlerly awficer?" exclaimed our custodian for the time being. "*Got no brush?*" he went on; "wotjer do wen yer ain't got nothink? USE YER 'ANDS." That phrase came back into my mind over and over when I was short of some little convenience of ordinary life and had to shift with something else. "Wotjer do wen yer ain't got nothink? Use yer 'ands."

Prisoners told me various anecdotes, mostly in disparagement of the Army or of persons who exposed themselves to unnecessary risk in warfare. The following is an example:

"We'd a young officer with us," said one man, "'e was Lord So-and-so's son. *Wouldn't* keep 'is 'ed down. Got up on the parapet saying 'e wanted ter look fer suthink—thought 'e was going to be a blooming 'ero likely—bullet in 'is head. We saw in papers afterwards as 'ow 'e 'ed died gallantly leading 'is men into action. Leading us into action, I *don't* think! Sez the Sergeant, 'Keep yer 'eds down, I tell yer,' sez 'e. 'Yer don't come 'ere to get yerselves killed,' 'e sez, 'yer comes 'ere to kill the other lot.'"

Of course, it is not necessary to believe all the yarns one hears. Probably other prisoners would

have a good laugh among themselves over some cock-and-bull story which I had accepted as truth. But with regard to a few I was quite sceptical.

A prisoner was telling me a very tall story of his adventures; how he deserted from France during the first winter, came home, joined another regiment, went out to France again, deserted a second time, returned to England, and then got employment on munition work before being arrested as a deserter and handed over to the military. I asked how he managed to get across from France—surely the boats were watched and passports and all sorts of things required before anyone could get on board. “Nothink easier,” he said. “Yer gets down to a port, waits till a boat leaves, and then goes to the British Consul. Yer tells ’im as ’ow yer’ve been left behind, and ’e sends yer ’ome.” “But doesn’t he want to see some papers?” I persisted. “How is he to know you’ve been on a ship at all?” “Yer says as ’ow yer’ve bin robbed of all yer papers an’ money an’ everythink,” was the reply. “Well, then,” I said, “doesn’t the Consul wire to the next port or inquire from the military or something of that kind?” “Not a bit of it,” was the rejoinder. “’E ain’t goin’ ter make no inquiries. If yer ain’t got nothink yer’ve got ter be kept, and’ ’oos going to keep yer while ’e’s inquiring? The Consul ain’t. ’E just ships yer ’ome an’ ’as done with it. ’E can think wot ’e likes but ’e don’t know nothink.”

This last phrase almost made me believe the story. It is officialism all over. “’E can think wot ’e likes but ’e don’t know nothink.” How many, many times

in my ordinary business I have met that official or one of his counterparts!

The foregoing stories are, whether true or not, much as I heard them. I have simply cut out some adjectives and reproduced the substance in the best way I can. The following is frankly a work of fiction. That is to say, whilst trying to convey the real effect of a real incident, I have completely altered the persons and things in order to avoid anyone getting into trouble if the story were read in the orderly room. I think the general effect of the incident is preserved, and that the details are technically correct, though I am not sure whether a man of the rank attributed to the inspector would be saluted in the way described. I will call it

#### THE STORY OF THE COOKHOUSE TINS

In one corner of the detention yard there was a pile of tins like fire kettles, which looked as if they had been there from time immemorial. One day when exercising I asked what the tins were there for, and was told that prisoners were set to clean them when there was nothing else to do. They were kept there as a more or less useless job, and, I presume, had the same heart-breaking effect on prisoners who knew that, as the crank and treadmill when the labour of the prisoner did not even pump water from a well. (See Charles Reade's *Never Too Late to Mend*.)

Two or three days afterwards an edict went forth that certain prisoners were to be "put on the bloody tins," and for the best part of an afternoon they

were at work with scouring stone and so forth doing what they could. The tins were, of course, not in any way sanguinary, but were rather dirty as well as corroded with use and exposure. After being cleaned the tins were piled in a different part of the yard, and I had a look at them the same evening when doing my solitary exercise.

As I was pacing up and down the yard I saw my jailor suddenly go very stiff, a quick footstep was heard approaching, and in a couple of seconds an extra-special non-commissioned officer came into the yard. I was never able to locate his precise rank—whether quartermaster, sergeant-major or what—but he seemed to be a kind of head man in the orderly room. I went on walking up and down without appearing to notice him, and after looking at me for a moment or two he turned to my guard.

“Yard needs cleaning out,” he said. “Yessir, be done first thing in the morning, sir,” replied the jailor like an automatic saluting machine. “And those tins,” went on the visitor, “have ’em all out immediately.” “Yessir, first thing in the morning, sir,” replied the jailor with another salute. Thus mollified and presumably satisfied with the rest of his survey the inspector took another quick glance round and departed as rapidly as he came.

“Never knows wen you gets them fellers poking round,” said the jailor as soon as he had relapsed into the normal and found his pipe again. He went on to anathematize the authorities in general and particularly men who thought themselves mighty smart fellers and went about ferreting and fussing



where there was no need. I could see that he was troubled about the tins.

Next morning a sort of guardroom committee was held under the window of my cell. The visit of the night before was related with many "sez I's" and "sez 'e's," and wishes for the visitor's speedy death and unhappy destination. It was clear that the tins must be moved. But where to? That was the problem.

After much discussion someone said, "But anyway they ain't our tins." (Sensation among his hearers.)

"Not our tins!"

"No, cookhouse tins."

"Then wot are they doin' here?"

"Dunno."

"'Oo brought 'em?"

"Cook'ouse men."

"Wot they bring 'em for?"

"Dunno, said it was orders likely."

"The impidence!"

(General remarks on the rottenness of things in the Army and the special depravity of cookhouse men; after which it was moved, seconded and carried unanimously that cookhouse men having brought the tins cookhouse men ought to take them away and that they be informed accordingly.)

I had already found out enough about Army ways not to suppose that anyone would step across to the cookhouse with this message. No doubt a report was sent up stage by stage through the chain of subordination to the orderly room and down from there to the cookhouse authorities.

Anyway, in about four hours someone from the cookhouse called to inspect the tins. I did not see him as I was in my cell, but I heard his voice and, putting different things together, pictured him as a Corporal or Lance-Corporal of Kitchener's Army, perhaps 26 or 27 years of age. The job was one they would not entrust to a common private, and his speech, being pleasantly modulated and free from blasphemous or indecent adjectives, showed that he was not an old soldier. He did not conduct his inspection in the spirit of an old soldier either, for instead of cursing everybody and everything and calling high heaven to witness that they were not and never had been cookhouse tins, he said immediately that they were just the tins they needed and that they had been very nicely cleaned. He would send his men to fetch them away, and if the prisoners could clean a few more tins for them they would be very much obliged.

"No," was the stolid reply, "we can't clean no more of yer tins. We 'aven't got the men, and we 'aven't got the stuff, and nobody could do nothink with them tins."

Probably the cookhouse Corporal was just going to point out the obvious incorrectness of the first and third objections when a voice, seizing on what was evidently thought to be the strongest line of defence, boldly called out, "No, we ain't got a bit of the stuff, not a blank blank bit of the blank blank stuff in the whole blank blank place, ain't we?"

"No," said other voices in resolute corroboration, "not a bit—not a blankey blanking bit."

Faced with this united testimony the cookhouse man proceeded no further. He may not have known, as I did, that there was enough "stuff" available to clean tins for weeks to come. Or he may have felt it beyond his power to set enough official machinery going to disgorge a further supply from the central store. On the other hand, he may have recognised in this conspiracy of prevarication a sort of official method of refusing his request—just as we recognise the same influence at work when some Government clerk sends us a neatly typed sheet of foolscap paper saying that he is "directed by the Secretary of State" (lie No. 1) to say that the matter has received careful consideration (lie No. 2), and that his official chief much regrets (lie No. 3) that owing to (lies 4, 5 and 6) he is unable (lie No. 7) to do anything and remains our most humble and obedient servant (further and concluding lies).

Anyway, the tins were taken away, and, up to the time of my court-martial, the prisoners saw them no more.

## PART II.

It was in the early part of May when I laid down my pen at Winchester, and now the year has drawn towards the latter part of August. I am still in military custody, and again in a guardroom cell. But this time I am in an encampment of wooden huts upon the South-East Coast not far from the mouth of the Thames. Outside there is the sea: sea breezes blow around the huts and whistle through chinks and doorways: some vestiges come in even to the dark and stuffy hutch in which I am confined. Otherwise, things are much the same. I am still defying military orders; again awaiting trial by court-martial, and see prison walls looming as prominently ahead. The main result of three months' interesting and, in some respects, unique experiences is that I can face the future stronger in body, clearer in mind and with my abhorrence of militarism reinforced by the things which I have heard and seen.

Except for the court-martial proceedings, the remaining days at Winchester were much about the same. Every morning before the trial was actually fixed I had to go up to the orderly room to be formally remanded; in the afternoon there was a little time for exercise (walking up and down the pave-



ment under a row of chestnut trees or else going round and round the guardroom yard), and nearly every other day I went to the bath-house, where plenty of hot water seemed to be always available. Sometimes I had a little exercise in the mornings as well, and it was on occasions of this kind that the best chance of talking to other prisoners occurred.

Although I was kept at Winchester for five weeks altogether, the routine of being remanded was pursued during the greater portion of the time. After being charged with an alleged offence which the Commanding Officer is not going to try himself, the first step is for the "Summary of Evidence" to be taken. The Winchester authorities began with this the first week I was there. The cell door opened, I was called out and marched with an escort of two soldiers up to the orderly room, and stood with my hat off before an officer seated at a little table. The escort men kept their caps on and stood at each side of me all the time. On the first charge (that of refusing to submit to medical examination), the Colonel, doctor, and Sergeant-Major from London came down to give evidence. Their story was laboriously reduced into writing by the officer. I asked two or three questions in cross-examination, and was told that they could not be allowed. The poor officer let himself in for a lively skirmish by saying this, because, instead of being shut up at once as a soldier would have been, I was properly in my element and stuck to my rights. In the end he had to admit the questions and write them down, the answers as well. On the charge of refusing to put

on military uniform evidence was given by Captain Huntington and a Corporal of the Rifle Brigade. The Summary of Evidence was then supposed to have been sent to the headquarters of the Southern Command to ascertain if a court-martial should be convened. I do not know what took place, in fact, but about a fortnight later the Adjutant informed me that it had been decided to drop the first charge and that evidence would be taken afresh with regard to the second. Not understanding the object of this, I said that I thought they should proceed as they were and did not wish to be kept without trial indefinitely. As the Adjutant could give me no satisfaction, I decided to speak to the Commanding Officer, and told the Guardroom Sergeant next morning before being marched up to the orderly room. He said he would inquire about it, and left me standing in a line with soldier-prisoners as usual in a sort of little courtyard opposite the door. We used to spend about half an hour or so waiting there in front of a Boer howitzer, which had an inscription stating that it had been made in some engineering works at Pretoria and was captured from the "enemy" at such and such a time. As officers passed and re-passed very frequently, there was almost incessant saluting and ordering us to stand at "attention" (heels together, with hands straight by the sides) while some officer passed, or to "stand at ease" (feet twelve inches apart, with hands together behind the back) immediately afterwards. Things went on like this every morning, but this time two or three superior Non-commissioned Officers came out to tell

me that "they didn't allow no frivolous complaints," and so forth. In short, that I could not speak to the Commanding Officer at all. Therefore, I waited until we were paraded before him in a string to be remanded again, and called out that I wished to speak about my case. The officer directed that we should all go out and that I should be brought in again separately, but when this performance had been gone through and I was back before him I found that the Commanding Officer for the day was not Lord H—— as usual but a sort of deputy, who very quickly cut me short with a burst of swearing and an inquiry as to whether I supposed *he* cared what I wanted or didn't want.

"Well, you needn't swear about it," I said.

"Needn't WHAT!" he exclaimed.

"Needn't swear about it," I repeated.

"Ooooh!" he yelled, and, poor man, all the visible part of his face and neck went livid, while he swelled like the frog which tried to blow itself as big as the ox. "Take him away! Take him away!" he exploded, and I was removed by the horrified escort. When at a safe distance from the orderly room they relaxed and had a good laugh.

At last the day arrived on which I was informed that the court-martial had been fixed for the following morning, and was permitted to send a telegram so that counsel could come down for my defence. At the same time I was handed a copy of the "charge" and also of the summary of evidence, but there was no time to post these to London, and I had to keep them to hand to counsel just before the trial began.

The following morning (May 11th) I was marched off specially early and taken to the Regimental Library, a building in which I had never been before. The upper floor consisted of a hall capable of holding five or six hundred people, with chairs occupying the greater part and a small stage at the end. Tables, chairs, books and writing materials were arranged for the court. Outside was a tiny landing at the head of the stairs, and on the other side of this a small room devoted to the "library" and a fine large place in which soldiers were playing billiards. After I had been kept on the landing for a little while, my secretary, Miss Bellis, and a shorthand writer arrived from London; some people connected with another case came also, and about half a dozen reporters followed. Courts-martial are supposed to be held in public, but as members of the public seldom know when they are to take place, the trials usually proceed practically behind closed doors. In this instance the Press knew that my case was to be heard. Presently my counsel, Mr. Horace Fenton, came across from the orderly room, where he had been to see the Adjutant, and in order that I might be able to speak to him we were taken into the billiard room, and the soldiers were told to stop their games and clear out. Although about thirty men were present, the order was given and accepted apparently quite as a matter of course, but when we protested against the men being interrupted someone said that we could use the library room. So for the rest of the morning we were either in that room talking over matters in the presence of a soldier or



in the large hall before the Court—having to go to and fro several times. The practice in courts-martial is that instead of the members of the Court retiring to consider any point (as is done in civil procedure) they stay where they are and everyone else is put out of the room. This causes a good deal more delay and inconvenience, without even having the advantage of enhancing the dignity of the Court. Instead of everyone rising respectfully and the business being resumed at once, there is a general shuffle when the Court has finished deliberating, and the proceedings cannot be gone on with until people have got back in their places.

When our turn came I was marched in between two soldiers, and had to stand before a green baize table used by Major Sir Guy Campbell and two other officers who formed the Court. At the corners near to me sat my counsel, Mr. Fenton, and the prosecutor, Captain Judge. The President was very painstaking and courteous—writing everything down at great length and repeatedly reading his notes so that we might be satisfied that they were correct. Mr. Fenton argued his points very ably and strenuously, and, when the case finished late in the afternoon, I felt that nothing could have been done better. The fact that the result was more or less a foregone conclusion did not prevent me from desiring to be tried as properly as possible.

The fullest report of the proceedings appeared in the *Hampshire Chronicle* for the following Saturday, and was as follows:

DISTRICT COURT-MARTIAL AT  
WINCHESTERPTE. SCOTT DUCKERS' REFUSAL  
TO WEAR UNIFORM

A District Court-Martial assembled at the Rifle Depôt on Thursday for the trial of No. S. 17179 James Scott Duckers, Rifle Brigade, for having, when on active service, disobeyed the lawful command of his superior officer, in that he, at the Rifle Depôt, Winchester, on April 20th, 1916, when personally ordered by Captain Herbert Huntington to try on his uniform did not do so, and refused to do so.

The Court consisted of Major Sir Guy Campbell (President), Capt. C. E. Hunt, Hampshire Regiment, and Capt. A. R. Davies, King's Royal Rifle Corps. Capt. and Adjutant T. Judge prosecuted.

Accused, who was represented by Mr. Horace Fenton, replied, in answer to the charge, "I do not admit I am under military law."

The President said that was tantamount to a plea of not guilty.

Mr. Fenton pointed out that accused did not say in so many words that he was not guilty, and he requested that his exact words should be entered on the record.

The President replied to this that Mr. Fenton would have an opportunity of saying something in defence. The province of the Court was to try

the accused as a soldier; it was not for them to say he was not a soldier.

Mr. Fenton said he was afraid he was misunderstood. He only asked that the Court should record what accused had said.

THE PRESIDENT: It is not an answer to the charge.

MR. FENTON: It is, in this way: It is a plea as to jurisdiction.

Captain Judge said that if it was so intended, the proper way was to put in a plea of jurisdiction. If it was proposed to do that, now was the time.

The President repeated that it might be made a part of the defence.

Captain Judge asked that if a plea as to jurisdiction was going to be put in he must ask counsel to say so, for the information of the Court. By the regulations, when the accused refused to plead, a plea of not guilty had to be recorded.

Mr. Fenton said he only wanted it on the record what the accused had said.

THE PRESIDENT: If he says he is not amenable to military law it goes to the question of jurisdiction.

Mr. Fenton repeated that all he wanted was that the words should be taken down. He did not want to put it forward as a plea to the jurisdiction of the Court. The whole question in this case was an order that accused was bound to obey.

After further discussion the Court was closed, and subsequently the President announced that they

had come to the conclusion that the words which the accused had used: "I do not admit that I am under military law," was a direct challenge to the jurisdiction of the Court, and therefore they could not be entered in place of a plea. The Court went by the rules that were framed to guide them, and he (the President) would put the question to accused again, was he guilty or not guilty.

MR. FENTON: He is not bound to plead.

THE PRESIDENT: Then the Court uses its powers, and enters a plea of not guilty. He would put the question again: Was accused guilty or not guilty?

ACCUSED: I have already pleaded, sir; I will not plead again.

THE PRESIDENT: Not guilty.

Captain H. R. Huntington, R.B., stated that at 11-30 a.m. on April 20th he was the Captain commanding the company to which the accused belonged, and was superintending the issuing and fitting of clothing. He ordered Rifleman Duckers to try on his uniform. He did not do so. He ordered him again to do so, and he still refused. Prisoner was then placed under arrest.

Counsel asked, in cross-examination, when Mr. Duckers first came under Captain Huntington's notice.

THE PRESIDENT: You mean Private Duckers.

MR. FENTON: That is the form of my question; when did Mr. Duckers first come under his notice?

THE PRESIDENT: You do not carry that rank as a private.



Mr. Fenton said he would call him the accused.

Captain Huntington said accused first came under his notice at about 11 o'clock on April 20th. He had never seen him before that day. He first saw him in his company office; he came in with other recruits.

MR. FENTON: What purpose was he there for? What was the reason?—I asked him certain questions which appear in the attestation form.

Counsel was proceeding to ask the witness further questions regarding "Mr." Scott Duckers, when the President interposed that the prefix "Mr." must not be used.

Captain Huntington said accused was brought into the room in order that he might be asked for certain particulars, such as if he was married or single. He produced the form that recruits have to sign.

MR. FENTON: Is it usual for recruits to sign the form?

Captain Judge objected to the question. That was not in Captain Huntington's jurisdiction.

MR. FENTON: I am only asking as to the routine.

CAPTAIN JUDGE: That is outside Captain Huntington's duty altogether. It has to do with recruits.

MR. FENTON: Is it usual for recruits to sign attestation forms? I want to ask if it is usual for recruits to fill up an attestation form? If so, was the accused asked to do so?

CAPTAIN HUNTINGTON: I asked him to answer the questions, and he refused.

MR. FENTON: Can you say whether the form was properly filled up?—No.

At the time when you put these questions was he not in custody?—Yes.

Did you know what charge he was in custody for?—I do not know.

Do you know it was in connection with an offence alleged to have been committed by him before he came to this Dépôt?—Only by hearsay.

Has the accused ever accepted the status of a Rifleman in your company, or recognised the status of a Rifleman?—He has told me that he does not consider that he is under military law.

Has the accused ever accepted the status of a soldier?—No.

Was there any discourtesy on the part of the accused when refusing to obey orders?—None.

In his refusal?—No.

Has he been in custody ever since the first day you saw him?—Yes.

Re-examined by Captain Judge: The accused deliberately refused to obey his orders to put on uniform.

Corporal A. Tagg, No. 1 Company R.B., gave evidence corroborating that of Captain Huntington. He heard Captain Huntington order the accused to try on his uniform. He did not do so, and then refused to do so.

This closed the case for the prosecution, and the accused having expressed his wish not to give evidence, but to address the Court, said: No doubt it is difficult for persons brought up in a military

atmosphere to appreciate my views or even to appreciate that they are sincere. I do not admit I am under military law, but if you decide against me I hope to serve whatever sentence you may pass, and renew my protest when I come out again. I should like to add that while at Winchester I have been treated with very great courtesy by the military authorities.

In his address to the Court, Mr. Horace Fenton said the first thing he wished to do was to remind the Court of what he said at the beginning, when the accused was called upon to plead. In answer to the charge, the accused said: "I do not admit that I am under military law." Upon that the President translated it into a plea of not guilty. He (counsel) apprehended that the charge under which the accused stood was under Section 9, Sub-section 2, of the Army Act. That section made accused liable to a sentence of penal servitude or imprisonment if he, while on active service, or not on active service, disobeyed the lawful command of his superior officer. What he wished to submit upon that was (1) that in order to come within the meaning of the Act, the accused must be a person subject to military law. That was the foundation and the authority of that Court to act. In the first place, was the accused subject to that tribunal? His submission there was that there was no evidence that accused was a person subject to military law. Secondly, the charge was said to refer to an offence committed by him while on active service. There was no

evidence that the accused at the time he disobeyed a lawful command was on active service. In that connection they were only concerned with April 20th, the date spoken to by Captain Huntington. There was no evidence that he was on any service at all. The section provides for the commission of an offence "on active service or not on active service," and here the charge was not an alternative one. If he (counsel) was right in his submission, there was no evidence of active service, and there was no alternative charge of committing such offence while not on active service. In the third place, there was no evidence that the command was a lawful command. It could not be inferred from the circumstances that it was a lawful command. The word "command" was qualified in the section by the word "lawful," and, therefore, he laid emphasis on the word "lawful." The fourth point was that it was a command given by "his" superior officer, who was Captain Huntington in this case. There was no evidence that Captain Huntington was his superior officer. Finally, he submitted that at the time when the so-called lawful command was given accused was under arrest. Mr. Fenton went on to elaborate these points, observing that he need hardly remind the Court that courts-martial had no jurisdiction over persons who were not subject to military law. It was also abundantly clear here that there was no evidence that accused was subject to military law, nor could it be so inferred from any set of circumstances. The other point



that he wished to emphasise was this: that as things existed, a person could only be subject to military law by two courses. The first was by attestation by virtue of the Army Act, and the second by virtue of the Military Service Act of 1916. Under the Army Act there must be attestation. It was clear from the evidence that there had been no attestation. Nor was there any evidence given which showed that accused was liable for service under the Military Service Act. Subsection 1 of that Act sets out the things necessary in order to bring a person under the Act. Further there was no evidence that accused was on active service, and therefore any inference which the Court might draw in the absence of specific evidence must be in favour of the accused. In the absence of any evidence on that point it was not competent for the Court to draw inferences, and particularly inferences unfavourable to the accused. The other point was that the accused was already under arrest, and the Army Act clearly laid it down that a soldier under arrest could not be ordered to do any duty other than the duty specified in Note 9 of the Act. Accused was a man who had no desire to escape merely on any technicalities which were peculiar to his own case, and he did not ask that any undue favour should be meted out to him. He had gone into this matter entirely with his eyes open. He knew that it was a serious thing to defy military law, and he was also fully aware that a sentence of a severe character could be

imposed. He had held certain views in regard to military service all his life, and he was conscious of the fact that the great majority of people not only disagreed with him, but were unable to appreciate that those views were sincere as far as the accused was concerned in times such as those now existing. Therefore, accused felt that it was a little difficult, without in any way wishing to be disrespectful to a Court of military men, who had been brought up to consider matters in a military atmosphere and with military traditions, that they could take any other than a serious view of the matters relating to the offence with which he was charged. From his (counsel's) experience of courts-martial, they were always ready and willing to listen attentively and with patience to what was urged on behalf of the accused. Beyond that counsel did not wish to say anything further, except to repeat his submission that, for the reasons he had given, no charge had been proved by which accused could be convicted by that Court.

Captain Judge said he did not think he need detain the Court with any further observations on behalf of the prosecution. The Army Act laid it down very clearly what should be the procedure and what constituted a military offence, and there was nothing urged on behalf of accused to which he need reply.

Upon this the Court was closed. Their finding will be promulgated later.

Private Scott Duckers, the subject of the foregoing court-martial, was a solicitor, of Chancery

Lane, and for some time past has been the Chairman of the London "Stop-the-War" Committee. He was due to speak at the Sunday "Peace" demonstration in Trafalgar Square a fortnight ago, but at that time was in military custody at Winchester.

After the trial I had some days further of the ordinary cell life (except that there was no orderly room performance), until someone gave me an unofficial intimation that next morning I was to be "read out." This ceremony consisted in being marched to the parade ground in company with two soldiers who had been tried and very quickly disposed of on the same day as my own court-martial. The troops on the ground were formed into a large hollow square, and an officer read out our respective crimes and punishments. When my turn came I had to step forward without my hat on, and should really have been standing rigidly at "attention," but not being quite sure about this pose, I ignored the loud whispers of the Sergeant-Major and stood in a nondescript civilian attitude. The officer had a bundle of papers, from different sheets of which he read my name and Army number, the crime, the court-martial, the finding, and sentence, the confirmation by some higher authority and a reduction of punishment by the General in Command. The upshot of it all was that I had been tried and found guilty of disobeying a lawful command given to me while on active service, for which offence I was sentenced to twelve months' hard labour, commuted to 98 days' "detention"—

this being imprisonment of a special kind, with a good deal of physical drill and such like.

When thus duly "read out," I returned to the cell for a few more days, and ultimately left Winchester on the 22nd May, after having been there about five weeks. Gosport was the place arranged for my "detention," and two conscientious objectors from Winchester had preceded me about a week before. Before departure I was taken round to the Quartermaster's Stores to be furnished with an Army kit. I refused to have anything to do with this, so they collected various articles of clothing, knife, fork and spoon, needles and thread, extra buttons and different odds and ends, and put them aside to be marked with the number which had been assigned to me. Also, a man was told off to carry them to the Detention Barracks for me when I was transferred.

The next proceeding was to go before the medical officer to ascertain if I were fit to undergo the punishment. Previously I had refused to let him make any official examination, though getting a few doses of medicine when I had a cold and felt rather run down. Strictly, there should have been examination both before the court-martial was ordered and also immediately before the trial, but I had refused to be examined and nobody seemed to bother any more. This time I thought it better to let the medical officer make some examination in case I might have something so obviously the matter with me as to make two or three months knocking about in a Detention Barracks dangerous, so he sounded



my chest and listened to my heart very carefully, asked one or two questions, and then passed me as fit to go. After this one of the military police took my height, and filled up a form stating that I was 5ft. 8in. high, with grey eyes, light brown hair, fresh complexion and tattoo marks nil. This was attached to another form stating that I had been in the Army for thirty-two days, confined to cells for thirty-two days, served thirty-two days towards a pension, and that my conduct had been "good" during that time. Some other word had been written first, but it had been scratched out and the word "good" filled in by Lord H— when he signed the form.

On May 22nd I left Winchester Rifle Depôt shortly after mid-day in company with a Sergeant, a Military Policeman with handcuffs bulging his pocket, and a soldier to carry the things comprising my kit, which had now all been marked 17179 R.B. The escort wore sword-bayonets, but had no other arms. The various sergeants and policemen bade me good-bye very affably, and we marched through the gates and down the street to Winchester Station—passing on the way a place where, during the Great Plague, the country folk brought food for the townspeople and picked up the money in pots of vinegar.

When the train came in, a compartment opened directly opposite us and a friend of mine, Mr. Henderson, of Charing Cross Road, stepped out. "Hello, Henderson!" I said, shaking hands with him, "I'm just off to prison at Gosport." The

Sergeant intervened, and while I got into the train with the policeman, he and my friend were talking on the platform, but the Sergeant had to get in as well immediately afterwards, so Mr. Henderson stood and watched us off. At first the Sergeant was inclined to think that the meeting was in consequence of some arrangement, but I pointed out that the time of our train had only been fixed that morning so far as I was aware, and that the stepping out of the compartment directly in front of us could not possibly have been arranged beforehand. "What did you say to him," I asked when the Sergeant had become somewhat mollified. "Well, I don't mind telling you," he replied. "I said, 'Do you know that man is a prisoner?'" "And what did he say?" I continued. "He said, 'Yes, that's what he told me.'"

After a couple of changes we arrived at Gosport Station and proceeded to the prison, or, as it is called in Army language, the Military Detention Barracks. Up to a few years ago such places were called "prisons," but without in any way altering the structures themselves the authorities changed a few names; "cells" became "rooms," and "imprisonment" "detention."

Arriving at a formidable gateway, the policeman rang a bell, and presently a small door unlocked and I stooped and stepped within. The Sergeant followed, but the escort and kit-bearer remained outside. The door was locked again, and I found myself standing in a courtyard facing a very plain brick building profusely ornamented with iron bars.

Big gates were at each side, and the general air of grimness was relieved only by two or three shrubs in green boxes towards the middle of the yard. We went round into a sort of lodge at the right hand side, the way being led by the prison Sergeant who had unlocked the door. There he perused some papers with great deliberation and asked what I had in my possession. I pulled out a couple of handkerchiefs, soap, tooth paste, gloves, muffler and a few other things. The Sergeant from Winchester produced a small parcel containing what were called my "valuables"—watch and chain, purse, fountain pen, safety razor and other articles sent on from the guardroom. These, said the prison Sergeant, must go back to the Company Officer or somebody at Winchester. I said that the Adjutant had specially told me that they could be put in the office at Gosport, and that it was no use leaving them at Winchester because at the expiration of my sentence I should probably go direct to camp. He had "nothing to do with that," said the Sergeant, and added that rules were rules. All the articles were examined with great care and sorted into little heaps—No. 1, the things to go back to Winchester; and No. 2, those permitted to be taken inside. The latter consisted of one handkerchief, two pieces of soap, a pot of vaseline, a tube of tooth paste, my razor case, and a packet of spare blades. Then, standing me straight in front of him and requiring my close attention, the Sergeant asked some formal questions in the peculiar monotone with which people repeat strings of words they have

been used to say over and over again daily for many years. I cannot guarantee the accuracy of my recollection, but the questions were something after this style:

Have-you-any-beer-wine spirits-brewed-distilled-or-other-intoxicating-liquor-concealed-about-your-person-or-effects-or-otherwise-in-your-custody-possession-or-power-at-the-present-time?

Have-you-any-tobacco-cigars-cigarettes-snuff-pipes-pouches-or-smoking-materials-of-any-sort-kind-manner-or-description-concealed-about-your-person-or-effects-or-otherwise-in-your-custody-possession-or-power-at-the-present-time?

Have-you-any-knives-scissors-razors-files-saws-bayonets-or-revolvers-concealed-about-your-person, etc., etc.?

There were one or two more questions, and, although I may have exaggerated a little in the description, and the actual wording might be different, my general impression was that the questions were, in the main, much of this kind. The practical effect is that any tobacco, matches, or stamps subsequently found on a man become confiscated, and he can be punished by the Commandant as well. Probably in most cases the contraband becomes a perquisite of the reception staff and nothing more transpires.

Having answered all the questions in the negative, I was taken across the courtyard and stood at the doorway of the building with the door itself on my right hand side. The Sergeant from Winchester was similarly stood facing me on the opposite side.



Great care was taken to put us each in our exact spot to some very small fraction of an inch. When these arrangements had been completed my papers were taken inside, and presently the door was unlocked again and another non-commissioned officer—the Sergeant-Major this time—came out with the papers in his hand. "Do you intend to make any resistance?" he said to me. "Not the slightest," I replied. "As a prisoner I will conform to any prison regulations as far as I possibly can." Without making any comment the Sergeant-Major went in again and left me with the Winchester Sergeant on the doorstep outside. "Seems to be a great job to get into this place," I remarked, but the Sergeant was on his very best official behaviour, and stood like a statue. Neither did he respond when a few minutes later the door opened and I said, "Good-bye, Sergeant," as someone took me inside. The kit was brought in as well, and I went across a long narrow hall, up an iron staircase and across a little bridge to the Reception Room. My conductor dumped the kit on the floor and left me with a pleasant-faced Sergeant and Corporal. "Well, what d'you want me to do now?" I said. "Take off your clothes and put on some of these," was the reply. "All right," I responded, and while I proceeded to undress myself the Corporal pulled out a plain khaki tunic and trousers, a pair of exceedingly substantial boots and suitable underclothing. I was weighed in my birthday suit and saw my civilian clothes made up into a parcel to go back to Winchester. Then, when some particulars had been

entered in a book, we proceeded to check the various articles of kit marked on an inventory. I found that a generous Government had provided me with two tunics, two pairs of trousers, one greatcoat, two pairs of boots, three shirts, a Cardigan jacket, identification disc, and a great many other things. The disc, which was provided with a string to tie round my neck, bore my name and Army number with the letters "C.E." in the centre. I did not find out until some weeks afterwards that this meant I was a member of the Church of England, and that if my body had been found on the battlefield it would have been for an Anglican chaplain to read the burial service—if I had any ceremony at all. Also that in places where the chaplains are paid on the capitation system an Anglican would draw ten shillings a year or some such amount, and my real chaplain would get nothing. Of course this was somebody's mistake, but it is the kind of mistake which seems to be always made in favour of the Established Church.

Putting on the official things, I saw the last of my own clothes, and was taken downstairs to have a bath. "You'll find there's only cold water," said my conductor, as I tried a couple of taps, "but you needn't bath more than you like. It's only a matter of form."

When I was dressed we went up the iron staircase again, then up another, and walked along a narrow balcony to No. 4 room. I was thus able to see that the long, narrow hall was the space between rows of cells arranged on three floors. The two upper floors had balconies all round and narrow little

bridges across the stairs, the bridges being like those to be seen when looking down into a ship's engine-room. Perhaps it was this resemblance that made me think frequently of the whole place as a ship and my cell as a cabin. This was a comforting thought, because, though small and cheerless as a room, it would have been considered very large and airy on shipboard, and even the grated window was better both for light and ventilation than any porthole.

"What am I to do with these?" I said to the Corporal as he gave me a pair of puttees rolled up like hospital bandages. "Wait a few minutes and I'll come and show you how to put them on," he replied, adding, "I'll do anything I can for you. You've surprised us very much to-day." "Oh! how's that?" I inquired. "Well, we've read about you in the papers, and expected you would make a tremendous row. We've had very lively times putting the khaki on some of your sort." He had to run downstairs then, and I was left to look round the cell. After Winchester, it was a slight disappointment, being a little smaller in size, having a rather worn cement floor instead of wooden parquet, and a window of ribbed glass through which it was impossible to get a clear view even of a patch of sky. A bed, composed of three planks fastened together, lay tilted on its side against the whitewashed wall on my left facing the window, and the other furniture consisted of a small, plain wooden table, which seemed to have been scrubbed by generations of prisoners, and a little three-legged stool. In one corner three small shelves supported a half-gallon water

tin, a small metal cup about the size of a christening mug, and a bright tin labelled "Blanco," containing a mixture for pipeclaying soldiers' belts, and presumably unused since the red-coat days. On the floor under the window stood a very bright dustpan, a tin chamber utensil and two brushes. There was a ventilator in the window and another over the doorway—the door itself being of the same pattern as the one at Winchester, and with an observation hole commanding the entire cell.

By the time I had noticed these things, another Sergeant appeared. He was the Section-Commander under whose charge I should be. Someone having brought the rest of the kit upstairs, the Sergeant called another prisoner and told him to show me how to arrange the things on the shelves I have mentioned and on another shelf over the bed. "How long are you doing?" said the prisoner, a short dark youth, rather dirty, I thought, but very deft in folding up the clothes. "Ninety-eight days," I told him, and when he asked "What for?" I said, "Refusing to soldier." "Oh! you're one of the C.O.'s, are you?" he remarked. "We've about thirty of them here. Some are on P.D." "What's that?" I inquired, "Bread and water," he explained; "punishment diet, it means. You'll get it soon enough if you don't do what they tell you here." Another prisoner came stealthily into the cell just then. In appearance he was almost exactly like the first one. At least, I thought so at the time, but perhaps it was because they were both dark and short and wore dirty khaki trousers and dirty blue-grey shirts.



"How long are you doing?" he asked, just like the other lad. When I told him he said, "Oh, you'll get cocoa in the morning then—No. 4 diet." "Convalescent home, this is," he added. I remarked that I was glad to hear it, and he went on, with much satisfaction, "Sixteen crimes I've done, and only in the Army ten months. I'm incor—, what is it?" "Incorrigible," I suggested. "Yes, that's it—in-krigible." His further confidences were interrupted by someone running past the door saying that the Sergeant was coming. When the Sergeant arrived the first prisoner had made what I thought was a very neat pile of the things, and he was just asking if I had any "smokes" or matches to give him. However, the Sergeant said that everything was wrong. *He* would show how the kit should be arranged. So it all came down and went up again, but what the difference was between the right way and the wrong way I could not fathom. By the time it was finished some soldiers came along with trays of tins, and dropped one at the door. The Sergeant told me to get up in the morning when the bell rang, turn up the bed and stand with my shirt off and soap and towel in my hand ready to "double-down" as soon as the door was unlocked. Then he pushed the tin inside and shut the door.

By that time it was getting towards five o'clock in the afternoon, I suppose, and after about ten minutes' violent shouting and slamming of doors, almost dead silence fell upon the place, and I hardly heard anything except now and then something like a sawmill. The tin contained watery, unsweetened

oatmeal porridge (commonly known as "skilly") and a lump of white bread was on the lid. I ate the bread, tasted a mouthful of the skilly, and, finding a *Manual of Catholic Piety* on the shelf, settled down to read. This work was bound in a black cover marked "Official Copy," and liberally disfigured with a rubber stamp stating that it was "Issued for the Public Service." Getting interested in the book and finding the stool uncomfortable, I put the bedboard down and stretched myself on the blanket as I used to do at Winchester. The cover of the observation hole clicked two or three times during the evening, but when I looked up the aperture was closed each time. Evidently it only made a noise when shutting, and someone stole along noiselessly every now and then to look in.

After reading for a couple of hours or so I was disturbed by another burst of shouting and door slamming beginning downstairs and working along each floor. "Put your work out!" and "Knives, forks, razors and rifles outside!" were the cries I heard. On reaching my cell they unlocked the door and I saw two more prison officials—a Sergeant and Corporal—the Sergeant in slippers and with his tunic unfastened as though he had been having a nap somewhere. "Knife, fork, razor and rifle. Put your tins outside," he said, so I put my knife, fork, razor case and the food tins down in the doorway. "Oh! you've no rifle yet, I suppose," he added. "Well, you can put your bed down now. You mustn't do it again before we come round." With

that he slammed the door, and I prepared to go to bed immediately.

Nothing is provided for Tommy Atkins beyond his day shirt, so I had to roll up in a couple of blankets and compose myself on the bare boards. The sun was still shining, and I could hear children's voices playing somewhere, but before long I was sleeping as soundly as if I had been in a feather bed.

Next morning I woke so early that only the faintest streak of light came through the window of the cell. By sleeping flat on my back I had obviated the most awkward part of plank bed discipline—the way in which it makes one's body seem to have so many projecting knobs of bone—and I felt quite rested, though for a few seconds not quite clear as to my surroundings. Frequently during my imprisonment there has been the sense of waking from a long dream, with the expectation of finding myself in pre-conscript conditions—of opening my eyes to see familiar furniture and rousing myself to hear the club valet say, "Eight o'clock, sir; number ten bathroom quite ready"—followed by a rush to the mind of things to be attended to as soon as I should reach my office later on. On this particular morning the first clue was the sawmill sound I had heard at intervals the day before. Now, I recognised it as an aeroplane, and next began to wonder how I should get through the coming day. The remark about not having a rifle "yet" was disconcerting, and I remembered that someone had put a bright silvered regimental badge in the front of the cap

which so far I had not tried on; also that among the articles of kit were some brass Rifle Brigade devices to put on my shoulders. This was not what I had reckoned on. As a prisoner I would wear the usual prison uniform and do everything possible to follow out the prison rules. But I never expected that before beginning to serve my punishment for refusing to be a soldier, further incidents of soldiering would be thrust upon me. "And now," I said to myself, "no one knows what treatment I may bring upon me if I begin to get in disagreement with these prison officials." In a few minutes I had settled this problem along lines which afterwards disposed of other questions of a similar kind. I agreed with myself as to three main propositions, viz.: (1) As a law-respecting citizen I must comply with all regulations (however distasteful) which I did not feel an overwhelming dictate of conscience to disregard. (2) With anything distinctively of a military character it would be against my principles to comply. (3) Consequences had simply nothing to do with the matter at all. From this it followed that as they were distinctively of a military character I must refuse to wear the Rifle Brigade badges or to handle any rifle which might be offered to me. The suggestion that I might wait to see what other objectors were doing I put aside immediately. I was not there to please other people at all. I was there to do as I felt right, and must no more trouble about other people's opinions (even if they were acting along similar lines) than about the possible consequences



to myself. So I got up at once and took the badge off the cap and put it away.

It was quite light everywhere when the bell rang at half-past five, and I had plenty of time to put the bed and blankets tidy, as well as partially dress myself to go down to the washing place. At six o'clock there was a noise in the hall below, and Sergeants went rapidly along the lines of cell doors, looking through the observation holes, shouting, "Shirts off for washing," "Stand with soap and towel in your hand," and similar phrases, with enough energy to arouse people a considerable distance away. For a minute there was a sudden lull, and then the Sergeant-Major called out the number of the "sections" into which the prison was divided, the Section-Commander replying with the number of prisoners he had just verified as being under his charge. There were six sections of about thirty cells apiece, so that allowing one prisoner to each cell the prison would accommodate about 180 men. The actual number this morning was in the neighbourhood of 160, as each section had a few vacant cells. I was in Section 5, and heard my Section-Commander call out, "Twenty-seven, sir," when his turn came. The Sergeant for No. 6 gave his number, and then the Sergeant-Major gave the order to unlock. The effect of this was like pandemonium let loose. The Sergeants opened the doors one after another with great rapidity, shouting "Double down! double down!" and the prisoners came out of their cells and went running at the "double" along the balconies and down the stairs. At various parts of the building

other non-commissioned officers were shouting "Double! double!" and sometimes slapping men on the backs or pushing them along. I found myself in a running stream of half-naked humanity, and hurried down the narrow stairs in the best fashion my clumsy new boots would allow. In the hall we were lined up for admission to the washing room in batches, and there again a good deal of shouting and pushing was going on. Too many men were allowed in at once, and had to jostle each other in a kind of race to get washed and back to their sections in time. I never counted the basins, but perhaps there were forty altogether, and they were filled with clean cold water at the start. Each had a cold water tap as well, and if there had been time to rinse the suds out after each other we might all have had a good wash. In the time at our disposal this was impossible, and, except on mornings when I got in with the very first contingent, I could never do more than wash from the running water as it came out of the tap. Even then it was necessary to throw the towel round my neck and run back wiping my face on the way. Otherwise, I should have been too late for the next operation—carrying out the slops. I *was* late the first morning, and the Sergeant spoke very severely about it, I thought, but soon found that that impression was due to my unfamiliarity with the place and the language generally used.

When back from the washing we had to throw on our shirts, tunics and caps as quickly as possible and march downstairs with our chamber utensils.

Each section was lined up in the hall to be counted by the Section-Commander. The number was then checked by another Sergeant, who let us through an iron gate, and at the same time put down the number on a slate, saying "Twenty-seven men in yard," or as the case might be. Filing out of the building, we emptied the pots into a cesspool and ran to form up in double line with the other members of our party. A Corporal stationed in the yard kept shouting "Double up, there!" or "Bend your back!" and frequently making a rush to slap or kick someone who was not moving rapidly enough. When lined up before our Sergeant, he counted us again, separated a certain number for the woodyard, and, shouting "Left TURN!" "Double MARCH!" ran the rest of us back to the iron gate. To save running quite as hard themselves the Sergeants would call out "Mark TIME!" as soon as the party got ahead, and frequently keep us dancing there for a minute or two while they shouted "Pick your feet up!" "Six inches from the ground!" "Change step, there!" or called out "Left, right; left, right" with great rapidity in order to make us go as hard as possible. Then at the gate we got the command "HALT!" and were told to "cover off" correctly, *i.e.*, get properly in straight lines and pairs. The Sergeant counted us again at the gate and called out the number to the Sergeant inside with the slate. He in turn checked us as we ran through into the hall and altered the figures he had to account for, while we were told to "double up" to our rooms—those of us not on landing-

cleaning or such like having to shut ourselves behind the doors. Usually the only men not sent into the woodyard were those who had to work inside, but while I was new at the business the Sergeant often took me in as well so that I could have sufficient time to clean my "tins."

These were a great nuisance, as they corroded very rapidly and had to be made like mirrors every day—the useless pipeclay tin being quite as important as anything else. Before long I found that to save spoiling the polish on them it was better never to use the christening mug or dustpan, but to drink straight out of the water can and to use a leather kneeling-pad to sweep the dust up in. Beside the tins I had to clean the brass buttons on my tunic and cap, but was fortunate in not having a quantity of harness to strap on my back as the majority of the prisoners had. The less you have in such places the less there is to get into trouble about when on parade.

The first morning I felt quite upset by the smell of the cesspool, but managed to eat most of the breakfast (dry bread with cocoa) when it came round about a quarter to eight, and to be ready dressed and shaved about half-past eight when the doors were unlocked again. Having washed the floor over after sweeping it, I emptied the dust into the pail, and as soon as the door opened I placed my tins outside for inspection and stood the table and stool as nearly as possible in the exact positions I had been shown. I thought everything was right until a prisoner said, "Where's your dust?" "In



the pail," I said. "You'll catch it," he remarked. "Here, this is the way," he added, and, darting next door, brought a kneeling-pad full of dust, emptied some on to my pad, and put it in the doorway with the tins. A minute or so later the Sergeant came along inspecting everything: the tins, the dust, the general interior of the cells, very rapidly and carefully. He noticed that I had no cap badge, but did not make any comment—contenting himself with pointing out the unsatisfactory way in which my tins were cleaned and the fact that three or four articles were about a quarter of an inch out of place. I said that I would try to do better next day.

Presently my name was called out with a number of others, and I had to go down to the Reception Room ready to go before the medical officer. About twenty men assembled there. Two or three other "admissions," two or three for release, two or three "on report" to be examined before punishment, and a group of prisoners who had "gone sick" *i.e.*, stated that they wished to see the doctor.

After a great deal of checking and counting we were arranged in little rows in front of the Surgery door. In company with the other newly-admitted prisoners I put my cap and tunic on the floor, unfastened my other clothes, and waited ready to step inside when my turn came. We were there some time before the medical officer arrived, and I stood looking through a doorway at bottles and hospital appliances arranged on shelves. Then another door opened, and a heavy, ponderous man in civilian clothes entered the surgery, said "Good morning"

to the Sergeant, and sat down at a little table just inside our door. When I entered the doctor dabbed me with a stethoscope without saying a word. I came out fastening my things and put my tunic and cap on again ready to march off with the others. "Did he pass you as fit for labour?" said the Corporal. "He never said anything," I replied. "Then that means you're fit," the Corporal explained. "Party! 'SHUN!" he continued. "Left wheel, double MARCH!"—in obedience to which we stood to attention and ran off in double-quick time across the bridge, down the stairs, and then were brought to a halt in the middle of the hall and told to "Stand at EASE!" We stood for what seemed some considerable time, and I watched the Sergeant on duty there checking prison statistics on a large blackboard. This showed the number of prisoners, their religions, diets and places of work at the time being; also the numbers for release that day, those undergoing punishment, and other particulars of the same kind. In religion the Church of England was largely predominant, and, as far as I remember the figures, they were, roughly: Church of England 120, Roman Catholic 30, Wesleyans 7, Presbyterians 1, and a few unclassified. One prisoner was on milk diet, but all the others had No. 2 or No. 4, the principal difference being that No. 2's had "skilly" in the morning as well as at night, while No. 4's had cocoa for breakfast. The diet was based on the length of sentence, the No. 2 prisoners only having a few weeks to serve. As men were brought in and out the Sergeant had to alter his figures so

that it would show exactly where and in whose charge the different batches were.

Presently someone called out, "Party! 'SHUN!" and a gentleman in uniform came along with the peculiarly typical slouch of a British officer. "What's your sentence?" he said to me. "Ninety-eight days—from the 11th of May, I think," I replied. "Yours?" he said to the other "admissions" one by one. "56, sir," "112, sir," "98, sir," (or whatever the figures were), they replied in a smart soldierly manner, much in contrast to my own. The officer then questioned the releases, told one man to clean his buttons properly, and saying "All right, carry on," to the Sergeant-Major, slouched off to his room. This was Colonel A——, the Commandant (pronounced Kom-mud-unt, with accent on the *Kom*). He was, I imagine, a very reasonable and kindly-natured man who for official purposes thought it necessary to behave like a bear. Once or twice he dropped this manner with me and became quite pleasant and affable. But at other times the official prevailed.

After being disposed of by the Commandant, we were marched off to different places, and I went with two new men into the "shop," where some twenty prisoners were sewing (by hand or by machines), tying ropes, cutting pieces of canvas and on other jobs of that kind. We three newcomers were set to sort out some ropes with rings at one end and tie them up into bundles of ten. At first it was extremely easy, but after an hour or so, what with the stuffiness and the dust and the physical effort of

hauling the ropes about, I began to feel very sick indeed, and thought I should vomit on the floor. It was a welcome relief to be called off to another part of the room, where an elderly prisoner was to show me how to do the work for my room. "Finishing nose-bags" was the job assigned. I had to take things like very stoutly-made canvas buckets, sew them by hand in two places where the machine thread was hanging from the end of a seam, snip off the ends of thread in various places with what seemed to be a particularly enormous pair of shears, turn each bag the other way out, press the bottom tight by forcing it over the leg of a stool, and then snip off some remaining ends. It was "cushy," said my instructor, meaning a particularly easy job. He asked the inevitable question as to how long I was doing, and said he was just going out after serving a sentence of nine months for being disrespectful to an officer.

[To prevent misunderstanding I may as well state, once for all, that when I say someone "told me" I do not in the least degree guarantee his story to be true. A large firm of caterers in London prominently displays in its various depôts notices to the effect that "The milk sold in this establishment is NOT guaranteed as being new, pure, or with all its cream." In a similar way I would give warning that no anecdote I repeat can be vouched for as new, true, or with all relevant details. "What the soldier said" is certainly not evidence, for there is a certain atmosphere in the Army which seems to make it impossible for reliance to be placed on any-



thing related by anyone, and the stories of the Sergeants were the most improbable. The "incorrigible" prisoner who told me about his sixteen crimes the first day had about a week later got them up to twenty-one, and three or four prisoners who, with an air of great pride, had informed me they were in for "striking" turned out to be ordinary deserters or absentees.]

By the time I had learnt the nosebag finishing twelve o'clock arrived, and, after a bell had been rung, parties of men came running in from various parts of the prison grounds. The same kind of yelling took place as they were urged to "double up" the stairs, and no one could relax for a moment until right in his room. All the doors had to be shut immediately except those of three or four men on each section who were acting as orderlies and had to go down again to fetch the dinners.

Our mid-day meal was, from my point of view, the most unsatisfactory of the three. Some watery soup was accompanied by a piece of bread and three potatoes boiled in their skins. On some days there was a little cheese. The soup was always unpalatable, and I never on any occasion swallowed more than about a spoonful. The potatoes improved in quality very greatly as the new season's supply came in—the old ones were not worth the trouble of cooking.

This first day I could not even touch the bread, but leaned my head against the table and waited until it was time to come out again. At two o'clock, when he came to unlock, the Sergeant saw I was

unwell and advised me to stop in my room, but, not wishing to give in to prison conditions so quickly and also thinking a little fresh air would be beneficial, I chose to go out on parade. In the afternoon this was not a very formidable business, I had heard.

While the dinner tins were being collected by the orderlies and taken to the cookhouse, we had to stand with our doors partly closed ready to step out at the word of command. "At your doors, Number Five!" the Sergeant would shout, and we had to bring our feet down on the balcony with a simultaneous sound. Any hitch would cause the performance to be gone through again. If we stepped out to his satisfaction there would come the orders "Right TURN!" "Form up, double MARCH!" and we had to run along the balcony and form up in a line. "Stand at EASE!" "'SHUN!" "Stand at EASE!" the Sergeant would shout two or three times to "liven us up" as it was called. Having ascertained the number on parade and accounted for any of his section sick or confined to cells, the Sergeant would run us at the "double" down the stairs and parade us in two lines along the hall. The other sections were being dealt with in the same way, and to the accompaniment of great noise the whole of the prisoners available for parade were drawn up in the hall, ordered to stand at attention, stand at ease, right dress, cover off, look straight in front, and generally badgered about to the different Sergeants' satisfaction. Then there was a great checking and re-checking of numbers until the Senior

Staff-Sergeant found everything correct and shouted "MARCH OUT!" in tremendous tones. The Section-Commanders then called their respective parties to attention, ordered them to right or left turn as the case might require, and ran the whole body out through the iron gates to the parade ground, a gravel stretch about 120ft. long and nearly as wide. Here we were drawn up in our sections and, after marking time until the Sergeants were satisfied, turned to the right and told to stand at ease. Dead silence followed. Then the Senior Staff-Sergeant, having surveyed us all from one corner of the ground, called out: "One marker, *shop*; one marker, *laundry*; one marker, *woodyard*; one marker, *men working inside*." Four men having run out and taken up positions at the side of the parade ground, we got the command, "Parade, 'SHUN! Right TURN!" followed by "On your markers! Double MARCH!" I was told to fall in with the shop party, and after a very few seconds' scramble the whole parade was re-arranged and the dust began to subside. After the new lines had been straightened out, the parties counted and re-counted, men rebuked for not looking in front of them, and all the rest of it, we got the order to "March off," and everyone ran away at the "double" as directed by the Sergeant in charge. My afternoon was spent in the shop doing the best I could with nosebags, and getting in there about half-past two we worked until perhaps twenty-past four. There was no shouting in this department, and a few whispers between the prisoners

called forth nothing more serious than, "Less talking in that corner, now!" from one of the N.C.O.'s.

Some more bags were given me to finish upstairs, and I was very glad when the time came to "double up" and shut myself behind the door of my cell. A little water was all I could get by way of refreshment until the bread and skilly came, and I was feeling so ill that I told the Section Sergeant I should have to put the bed down. He was very sympathetic, and advised me to "go sick" in the morning, but said he had no power to give permission for me to lie down. If I were caught by the patrol there would be trouble. I said that I should risk that if I did not feel better, and so after being locked up about five o'clock I lay down and went to sleep immediately. When wakened by a great noise of banging and shouting at the door, I tried to get up and tell the patrol that I was unwell, but fell back on the bed and had to let him bang. He went away for the key or something and returned shortly with another Sergeant, who spoke very kindly to me, got some fresh water, had the untouched work taken out, and seemed anxious to do everything he could. I said that I should be all right in the morning, and soon slept soundly until dawn. Then, feeling quite well again, I finished up the bread left from the night before and until time for the morning parade went through the same routine of washing, breakfast, cleaning up, and so forth as on the previous day.

Instead of going to see the medical officer, I decided to go on parade. I had the greatcoat rolled



very neatly and folded something like a horse collar to go over my shoulder, and went off with the other prisoners to the parade ground, much after the fashion of the afternoon before. The chief difference was that most of them had rifles and equipment, and that the Sergeants were extremely critical about the smallest details. The Sergeant-Major took charge of the parade, ordered the men with rifles to slope arms when the Commandant arrived, and went with him slowly up and down the lines scrutinising each man front and back from head to foot, and every now and then discovering some button insufficiently polished or a trifle of accoutrement not precisely at it should be. The Section-Sergeant would either apologise for the offender by saying it was his first day on parade (or something of that sort), or else state that he had been warned before and had no excuse. "Room dirty?" the Commandant would inquire. "Yes, sir. Can't do no good with him, sir," was the inevitable answer. On this the Sergeant-Major would say in a dreadful voice: "*Bring your board down at twelve o'clock!*" to the unfortunate culprit, who all the time had been standing rigidly at attention not daring to utter a word, and the inspection would be resumed. Sometimes the man was questioned though. "Did you shave this morning?" was a favourite query. "Yes, sir," would be the reply.

"What with?" (in tones of deep sarcasm).

"Razor, sir."

(Close examination of the man's face and chin, followed by the magisterial pronouncement:)

"You've *ONLY been through the motion* of shaving. Parade in marching order at two o'clock!"

Other men would simply get a poke in the neck with the words "Hair cut!" or be otherwise slightly admonished, but after the Commandant had passed on out of earshot the Section-Sergeant would always go back and, in Army language, express his opinion of the offender, who would commonly retort or justify himself until told not to "answer back," and that if he said "another word" he would be "shoved inside."

[The "board" which always had to be brought to the Sergeant-Major's office when a prisoner was wanted for anything (good or bad) usually hung outside the cell, and displayed particulars of the crime and sentence, as well as the marks earned and work done from day to day; letters written, visits received, punishments awarded, and similar items. It was possible to earn eight marks per day, and if I had done so my sentence of ninety-eight days would have been shortened by sixteen days remission.]

After inspection the men on parade were split up into gymnasium and drill parties of various kinds by the method of ordering them to form up on "markers" described before. I was told to join a squad of about twenty men called "Recruits of not less than one month's service." "What's your name?" said the Sergeant there when I "fell in." "Duckers," I replied. "You're not Scott Duckers, are you?" whispered the prisoner at my side. I looked cautiously at the Sergeant, and without turning my head whispered the reply in a manner

acquired at Winchester. (N.B.—If a soldier turns his head in the slightest it can be detected by anyone fifty yards away owing to his cap being out of alignment with the others.) "Capital to have you here," he whispered. "Is Clifford Allen locked up?" but before I could reply we were being told to "number," and began to receive instructions in the art of "forming fours." When formed and re-formed a great many times we ran off at the "double" to the exercise field—a very pleasant triangular meadow about two and a half acres in size. It was outside the prison walls, but enclosed in a strong sleeper fence with barbed wire on top. A railway line passed along one side, and we could see people in the trains, as well as into the windows of a row of houses adjoining. Aeroplanes were nearly always circling about, and sometimes five or six would be in view. The field contained model dug-outs and trenches, together with apparatus for bayonet fighting, but we never had any personal concern with these.

From the field it was possible to see that the prison consisted of a long red brick building three storeys in height, with a piece jutting out in the middle like the centre portion of a capital E. At the point of junction there was a large ventilating tower. The main building comprised the rows of cells with hall between them, and the projection portion was Chapel above and Workshop below. The whole structure had been designed in the plainest and ugliest mid-Victorian factory style—ordinary-sized factory windows serving for the Chapel and Work-

shop, and openings eighteen inches high being sufficient for the cells.

I do not mean that all these things could be seen at once, or that there was any chance of gazing about. On the contrary, we were strictly charged to look right in front of us, and the rapidity with which we received different commands rendered the utmost attention necessary. To let the mind wander in the least meant turning to the right instead of the left or getting some small fraction of time out of the correct movement. I found this simple "squad drill" as it was called a really hard but beneficial exercise, both for increasing bodily vigour and self-control. The Sergeant gave the orders very civilly, and almost apologised if any unparliamentary expression were used. "I'm not a swearing man," he would say, "but some of you men would make a parson swear; you would. Change step there! Left, right; left, right!" As the Sergeant kept admonishing us by name, we began to know one another a bit better, and by judicious whispers found out where our neighbours came from and what sentence they were "doing." Two or three were from the Midlands, and a few came from Bristol or Cornwall, and nearly all were in the Non-combatant Corps and had no cap badges.

After something over an hour's exercise the Sergeant brought us to a halt and said he would now teach us how to give the proper salute. While he was giving a demonstration of how to do it and how not to do it, I managed to catch the eye of a Staff-Sergeant who was keeping a general eye upon our



squad as well as on three or four others receiving different kinds of instruction in the field.

"I don't wish to make any scene," I said when he came up, "but I'm not going to do this at all." He said, "Very well, wait till you get the command," and so in another minute or so when an order was given for the first motion I stood fast without moving my arm. The others obeyed. "All right, I'll take him in," said the Staff-Sergeant. "Duckers! Right turn, quick MARCH!" and away we went, the whole incident having passed off without any hectoring or fuss. Inside the prison I was halted, and the Staff-Sergeant asked very good-naturedly why I refused that particular order, and concluded the conversation by sending me up to my cell with the remark that as this was a free country I could think what I liked, but in those sort of places it would be better to put my principles in my pocket.

While I was reading a few hymns over to myself an hour or so later the cell door suddenly unlocked, a voice cried "'SHUN!" and I got up on my feet as the Commandant and Sergeant-Major entered. "What's this you've been doing in the field?" the former inquired. I replied that I had come intending to carry out all the prison regulations, and was exceedingly sorry to have to come in conflict with them so quickly, especially as I thought the physical exercise would do me a great deal of good—but that I could not agree to learn saluting or handle a rifle or wear a regimental badge. The Commandant did not make any remark about the latter points, but suggested that saluting was only part of the drill. It

was a mere physical exercise, and so forth. "And if I start letting you off," he said, "what about all the others?" I replied that I did not ask to be "let off," and did not want any favours. If my action carried a punishment, I would try to accept it without resentment and do the things which I felt I could do just as I originally intended. He seemed amused, and said we were a strange lot to deal with, and that there were eight men in cells who would do nothing at all. Had I come to stir up the others to make themselves awkward? "Not at all," I replied, "as far as I have any influence, it will be used to make things move with as little friction as possible."

For the rest of the day I was locked up without any work to do, and Sergeants looked in now and then to give me their views. To their gloomy prophecies of my future I laughed, and said that I had nothing to do with the consequences.

Next morning, instead of going on parade I was taken before the medical officer to be examined as to fitness for punishment. He had very strong views apparently, and began to air them rather offensively. (It is noteworthy that civilians well over military age are often much more militarist than those who are in the Army and know what military service means. The latter are used to men not wanting to be soldiers, and have probably often longed for their own "ticket" of discharge.) I said that I had my own views and was sure he did not wish to start an argument with me about them. "No!" he exclaimed vehemently, and at the same time dabbling some writing on a printed Army form, "nor with anyone

who holds such " (scratch, scratch from the pen) "silly ideas. Fit for punishment! "

[By all accounts he was much less restrained with other C.O.'s, and frequently threatened to certify them as lunatics, but fighting soldiers with picturesque stories of their exploits gave the doctor a very different name. They used to boast (perhaps quite unwarrantably) of the success with which they had humbugged some concession from him.]

From the surgery I was sent downstairs and afterwards marched, with my cap off, into the Commandant's room. The Sergeant and Staff-Sergeant gave evidence about the saluting. I said it was quite true. The Commandant made some remark, and I was out of the room and doubling upstairs within the next few seconds. "What did he say?" I asked the Sergeant who ran up to see me safely shut in. "Don't know," he replied. "I never can tell what he says." However, I soon found that the sentence was "Two days P.D." (short for punishment diet). That is to say, close confinement with no food except so many ounces of dry bread morning and night. (I do not know the weights exactly, but the pieces were not very large.) They allowed me to have fresh water twice daily, and did not take the Bible or hymn book away, but I was not permitted to leave the cell for any purpose whatever, and the chamber utensil could only be put outside once each day. This lack of sanitary arrangements added to the punishment very unpleasantly. The second day I was allowed to shave, but only in the presence of the Sergeant. "Afraid I shall cut my throat?" I asked,

with the little safety razor in my hand. He smiled mysteriously, and said he had to obey orders. Fortunately, there was no work to do. My plan with the food was to divide each piece into halves, and eat only half the allowance at breakfast and tea-time, making dinner and supper out of the other portions. I ate the bread very slowly and drank water frequently. Also I put on the Cardigan jacket and muffler to keep myself as warm as possible. Being at the best of times a very small eater, I got through this and other stretches of "P.D." without any very serious discomfort—though after the first day I began to feel faint, and by the afternoon of the second day I used to be unable to read. Owing to the regulation about not putting the bed down, I had to walk the cell or sit on the three-legged stool.

These physical disadvantages were infinitely more than compensated for by the rich spiritual experiences I enjoyed. It is not possible to describe the peace, the joy, the confidence and trust I felt during those times. And how many of the hymns seemed to have been written just for such occasions! My whole prison period was one of closer and more real belief in the great spiritual forces of the universe, but the times of Punishment Diet were by far the best. I had often pointed out to people how many of the greatest men in all ages were prisoners or fugitives from justice, and how many of the grandest books have been suppressed by rulers or written in prison or monastery cells. My idea used to be that these men were imprisoned largely because of their greatness, but now I am more inclined to think that they



would not have been the men they were but for long years of silence in their cells. Bunyan was in Bedford jail for twelve years, if I remember rightly, and could have gone out almost any time if he had promised not to preach the Gospel. Perhaps he was tempted to think his life was being wasted, and yet but for such confinement would he ever have been inspired to write out his immortal dream?

The day following the end of "P.D." was generally the worst, and two or three times I had to ask permission to give up my work early in the afternoon. The Sergeants never made any difficulty in such circumstances.

The first day I was undergoing this experience the Anglican chaplain called. He was a cheery, boyish fellow in khaki uniform, and looked in to see me because the "board" was gone and a notice that I was on P.D. hung outside the door. When I told him my name and what had happened, he laughed and said the Commandant had told him I was coming—adding that he did not know whatever he would do with me. I disclaimed the idea of being anything but perfectly harmless and anxious to get on well with everybody. "Yes, but you see he reads the so-and-so," was the reply. I promised to go to service on Sunday, and the Chaplain said he would look in again towards the end of the week. He kept his promise, and with rare exceptions called to see me every time he visited, and on one occasion brought a book for me to read. What I liked better than his spiritual ministrations was that he always had a budget of interesting and perfectly unclerical news.

The other chaplains often felt compelled to keep away from topics which they thought might possibly be outside their functions.

When the punishment diet was over, I fell in with the recruits' squad as previously, and quite expected to have to disobey again. But to the surprise of everyone in the little party we never had the subject brought up at all. Nothing was said on either side, but the saluting practice was quietly discontinued. For more than a month I went on with the field drill followed by exercise in the gymnasium every morning after breakfast, and with seven hours industrial work per day (wood chopping, sawing and building; nosebag finishing and such like) without losing a mark or coming in conflict with the authorities.

Finding that I could get on all right, I soon became anxious about the eight men in their cells. I knew that they were having frequently-repeated sentences of bread and water, and wished to make sure that they knew what was being done outside. One day I took the opportunity of speaking to the Senior Staff-Sergeant and asking if I could get permission to visit the men. He said that such a thing was quite without precedent, but next day I was taken before the Commandant, who intimated that he did not care whether the men lived or died, but that they were certainly likely to injure their health very seriously, and if I thought I could do any good with them, I was welcome to try.

Accordingly, I spent the next two afternoons going round with the "Staff," as he was called, and having talks with the men. Some were very suspicious of

me, and others evidently thought that I was playing into the hands of the authorities. The line I took was that, of course, if they felt a point of principle to be involved there was no question but that they must resist to the last; whether they lived or died had nothing to do with it. On the other hand, it was both foolish and wrong to resist without reason, and in case they were not properly informed as to the work outside, I had asked permission to see them and explain. They were wonderfully cheerful and courageous as they told me of their experiences. Two came out for a little while and then went back again, while in the end (after weeks of punishment), they all were court-martialled a second time and sent to civil prisons. From the "getting them out" point of view my visits completely failed, and I never got on so well with the Commandant afterwards, but I cleared my own mind; and though I have no means of telling whether my visits helped them, their brave spirits certainly helped me.

On Saturday mornings we had work instead of drill, and were then shut up for the day. On Sundays we got up a little later, had an hour's exercise (going at quick-pace round the parade ground), and then attended the Church of England service. This took place in a plain building furnished with two altars, a harmonium, reading desk and pews. As it was used by the Roman Catholics as well, the wall bore pictures of the Virgin Mary and the fourteen stations of the Cross. When we had all been seated for some time the Chaplain came in and wished us "Good morning," disappeared into the vestry to put

on his Church garments, and then began with a hymn. This was followed by an abbreviated service from the Prayer Book, which was made very easy to follow by the Chaplain's method of giving the page numbers instead of leaving us to flounder to and fro among collects and psalms.

The sermon had no text, and began with an anecdote. Was religion worth while? the preacher asked. There were times when we all felt "fed up with life," he continued, when we were "up against it"—when there seemed to be no prospect of "carrying on." What were we to do? Answer: Pray, read the Bible and, above all, attend the Sacrament of the Holy Communion. Rather slangy perhaps, but short and interesting. For the rest of Sunday we were shut up in our cells. The dinner was supposed to be a little better, there being "duff" or pudding of some sort embedded in gravy instead of the watery soup.

After the first sixteen days I had earned sufficient marks to enter the second stage (the men in cells all the time never got to this at all). The privileges were: (1) Mattress to put on the plank bed; (2) library book changeable twice weekly; (3) permission to write one letter and receive one visit a fortnight; and (4) unlimited receipt of letters passed by the Censor. The principal rule about incoming letters was that they must not encourage breaches of discipline. A letter from one of my sisters was held up for a fortnight because she said it was "hateful" to think of letters being read by the Censor beforehand. The Commandant made a great



fuss about giving me it at all, and two C.O.'s had their outward letters censored and returned for simply mentioning that I was a fellow-prisoner.

Of these privileges the right of receiving letters was by far the best so far as I was concerned. In my outward letters I could say so very little that would pass the Censor and yet not give a false impression. The bed was only three hard cocoanut fibre cushions (called "biscuits"), which would slip apart in the night and let me down on the planks; while the "library" consisted in chief of very mutilated adventure stories of the Marryat and Henty type. I got Thackeray's *Pendennis* out first, and, owing to the time it took to get through the tasks in my cell, was ten days in reading it.

The incoming letters were given out at afternoon parade two or three times a week. We had to run out as our names were called, and if a man had, say, three separate letters he would have to run out three times, and then carry the letters in his pocket all the afternoon without a chance of looking at them.

The Wesleyan Chaplain came to see me regularly every week, and was most helpful and kind. When after several weeks I got sufficiently expert with my work to be able to have time for reading he brought me several books of a religious character, the first being William Penn's *No Cross, No Crown* (written in the Tower of London during one of Penn's prison experiences).

Later, we were all glad to have weekly visits from the Chaplain of the Society of Friends. The fact of having the chance of conversation with a

visitor thoroughly in sympathy with our own feelings was in itself something to look forward to, and though personally I never had to put up with the slightest show of violence, and was never even sworn at by anyone except the officer at Winchester, my experience might have been very different if I had been a friendless young recruit, conscripted from a country farm. I think we all had the feeling that the mere fact of a Quaker Chaplain having access to us was a great safeguard, and that if such arrangements had been in operation at the outset many regrettable occurrences would have been avoided. At Gosport I never *saw* any C.O. treated in a way which I could have asserted to be illegal. Sometimes the man was made the butt of so much sarcasm that no doubt he would have much preferred a blow from the Sergeant's fist. At other times we were repeatedly put through severe exercises in such a way as to show that the orders were given maliciously. On such occasions I went on as long as possible, and then "fell out," saying that I could do no more. When the Sergeant-Major spoke to me once about it, I took the opportunity of saying that Sergeant So-and-so deliberately tried to be objectionable when taking us, but that possibly it was because he thought he should have been given a more advanced squad to look after. The Sergeant-Major did not say anything, but we were never placed under that Sergeant again. Some of the first C.O.'s at Gosport had a very rough experience, I believe, but by the time I arrived the prison staff had found out that they would have to be careful, and I think

that both the Commandant and Sergeant-Major were anxious to see that there was no treatment of which we could reasonably complain. The result was that on the whole we were treated a good deal more civilly than the soldier-prisoners. On two or three occasions I saw lads knocked about very brutally, and was much perplexed as to what I should do. Except in one case there was no reliable witness who could have corroborated me, and even then I was not sure but that if I had made a formal complaint to the Commandant the victim himself might not have given the case away in order to curry favour with the Sergeant, for the lads who come in for the worst treatment are those who will submit to be "put upon" and are easily terrified. Having many opportunities of conversation with the prison officers, I used to let them know that these incidents were being observed—either by telling the man himself or someone who would be sure to repeat my remarks to him—generally adding a hint that if this officer ever found himself charged with violence to a C.O. all these other things would be brought up against him. I think that this was on the whole a better, if less courageous, way of dealing with the question than by making a formal complaint to the Commandant, when there was so much chance of the case breaking down and so prejudicing my whole position. At the same time, I determined that on the first instance of deliberate violence to a C.O. in the presence of witnesses the right course would be to report the officer immediately. No such incident took place at Gosport, and on the whole I feel sure

that while they would sometimes get out of temper and the prison discipline made them feel sharp and harsh when giving orders, the Sergeants were thoroughly good-natured men. Few of them had been prison warders for very long, and I think the majority were re-enlisted policemen. Before leaving this subject, I should say that the ordinary prisoners (who were mostly deserters or absentees) gave us their heartiest sympathy. They did not understand the grounds for our objection very clearly, and we had never much chance for explaining, but they quite applauded our resistance to the authorities.

"You'll work your ticket all right," they used to say. "About fed up with you, that's what they are."

When I got thoroughly into the prison work the days soon began to pass rapidly, as they were so much the same. The first few hours in a new position of this sort seem longer than days of uneventful routine. In the morning there would be an hour in the woodyard, after breakfast three hours' drill and gymnasium, while in the afternoon I worked in the shop as a rule. We were supposed to have three hours' drill and seven hours' industrial work—total, ten hours per day. One afternoon per week was devoted to laundry. This was the most comic performance we had to go through. At afternoon parade we turned out with our dirty things in buckets and the floor scrubbing brush on top. Prisoners without floor brushes had to bring hair brushes instead. Boards supported by empty boxes were arrayed in lines of rough tables, and each prisoner secured



board space averaging two square feet. Having passed through the boiler house in single file, we came out with our buckets filled with hot water, and were given pieces of soap. The plan was to lay our things on the boards and scrub them with the brush. Meanwhile, Sergeants walked up and down to stop us from talking and to shout, "Hurry up," and expressions of that sort. We were allowed a bucket full of cold water for rinsing, and two prisoners could help to wring each others' washing out. In our section we carried the wet things into the prison and hung them over the balcony rails until more or less dry. Prisoners in the ground floor had to dry their washing in the cells.

The bath arrangements were not very satisfactory, either. There was only cold water, and we had a strictly limited time for this as everything else—including use of the closets. It was so difficult to get permission to use the latter except when marched up to them in groups that I found it necessary to use the chamber utensil for all purposes.

Taking everything on the whole, then, it may be said that, while the place was admirably supervised and very strict discipline enforced, the emphasis was placed upon a surface appearance of smartness and cleanliness. We had one wash a day and (if we persisted in asking for it) one bath a week.

The washing had to be done in slap-dash fashion first thing in the morning, and our hands were quite dirty in the woodyard long before we came in to breakfast. The laundry arrangements were preposterous. On the other hand there was the closest

scrutiny of buttons and equipment. Every polishable thing had to be polished to the utmost extent. It was amusing to contrast the rapidity with which the medical officer inspected us on Saturdays (we were drawn up in a line with shirts unbuttoned and bare arms extended) with the slow and deliberate inspection on parade every other morning of the week.

After my first experience of "P.D." I did not get into any trouble for over a month. Then an order came out that all prisoners not members of a Non-combatant Corps were to drill with rifles. Most of the C.O.'s who were out working had been given non-combatant certificates, and were unaffected. Three or four of us did three days' "P.D." each, and when we disobeyed the order next time nobody took any notice.

Then towards the end of June we heard that the Prime Minister had made some kind of statement as to the prospect of our release. I received a good many letters, and was fairly well informed on some points, though on others which I suppose my friends thought I should be "sure to know" I was completely ignorant. However, I knew that a Civil Committee had been promised, and was more or less prepared when a few mornings afterwards all the C.O.'s were sent in from the field, and the Commandant came to my cell a little later. He never said anything about the Prime Minister or any Parliamentary statement, but after surveying the cell generally, remarked that I seemed to be getting on satisfactorily with my work, and intimated that in recognition of such conduct he, the Commandant,

would of his own mere motion and free grace do what he could to secure my release if I would take civil employment. He suggested clerical work with a military contractor. I replied that I could not accept work with a contractor, and I preferred employment for which I was qualified. "Oh! you wish to make money!" he exclaimed, as though the desire to work without payment were a universal human instinct. I said that if I had wanted to make money out of the war I should probably have taken a very different course, but that though the Government had put me in prison and destroyed my business, I did not think they would make me into an industrial conscript any more than a military conscript. He changed his tone a little then, and, pressing me to think the matter over, went off. By the sound of opening and shutting doors I knew he was visiting other objectors not far off, and when we were able to whisper a few words afterwards I found that about a dozen who were gardeners, carpenters and in similar occupations when arrested, had expressed their willingness to go back to work without anything occurring to them as to the likelihood of conscript conditions being enforced. Next day some or all of them went before the medical officer and began to talk as though they were almost as good as released. (Some were still in prison when I left Wandsworth six weeks afterwards.)

Two days later I asked to see the Commandant, and said that I could not very well hope to resume my business even if released unconditionally. I should have to seek a situation, and that if the Civil

Committee could find me one I would willingly accept any reasonable employment of the sort for which I was qualified. When asked to name some kind of national industry in which my services might be useful, I mentioned the legal department of a railway company. There was some discussion as to whether railway companies were and were not still private corporations, but the result was that at the suggestion of the Commandant I wrote the following letter setting out my views:

To the Commandant,  
Military Detention Barracks,  
Gosport,  
Hants.

Sir,

Understanding that there is some plan for the release of conscientious objectors who are willing to undertake civil employment, I venture to state my own position, so that if you see fit, the matter may be submitted to the proper authority. I do not feel able to work either for a Government Department or for a military contractor, and this is a point of principle. Apart from conscientious reasons, I am reluctant to undertake work which is not of a legal character, because in that case I might be unable ever to renew my practising certificate as a solicitor, and should so lose the benefit of many years' training in my profession. If it is impracticable for me to return to private practice, the position would be met, I think, if it were possible for me to secure employment in the legal



department of a railway company. I do not stipulate that it should be to do the work of a solicitor, but in default of anything better I would work as an ordinary clerk under whatever are recognised as fair conditions by trade unionists, though not as a conscript.

I am now 33 years of age, and have been in legal work as an articled clerk and solicitor for the last sixteen years. I have been qualified for over ten years, and for eight years prior to my arrest practised on my own account at 27 Chancery Lane, London. When the war broke out I had in my employment five duly qualified solicitors in addition to a staff of ordinary clerks. My work was mainly of a litigious character, but I am competent to undertake almost any branch of legal business, and am a fairly good advocate. As a clerk I could do copying, and have a knowledge of shorthand, typewriting and general secretarial work.

I am, etc.,

(Signed) J. SCOTT DUCKERS.

5th July, 1916.

I never heard anything in reply to this letter, but towards the end of July I was asked three or four times if I wished to apply to the Central Tribunal in connection with what was vaguely called the "scheme." I said, "What is the scheme?" and finding no one could tell me, said that I would wait until some details transpired.

Matters remained like this until the 7th August, when I was sent to Wandsworth.

Meanwhile, I began to get a little more in trouble with the Commandant. The first thing was about coir pickings.

Coir is rough cocoanut fibre used for stuffing soldiers' pillows and beds. It is similar to the material from which door mats are made. When used for bedding it gets together in hard lumps in course of time, and when the covers are worn out the coir is re-picked and used over again. The work is very unpleasant, owing to the dust it creates, and a certain weight of coir has to be picked in so many hours or minutes. If a prisoner picks it as finely as he is told to do so, the task cannot be accomplished, and the method of the experienced is to stuff their pillows, etc., with three different qualities: (1) fair, half or quarter-picked in the bottoms and sides; (2) solid lumps (which have never been touched) in the centre; and (3) very finely-picked coir on the top. Then they dump the bags down on the scale, and if of proper weight they pass inspection all right.

I was only put in the coir yard three or four times, and at first I was either put to sorting pillow covers or given some coir which had been picked already and had to be made extra fine for some particular purpose. The first time I was put to work under normal conditions I was brought up on report and convicted for not performing my task. I did not make any defence, as I should probably have brought trouble on the heads of the more kindly Sergeants who had given me an easy task on the previous day. The sentence was that I should go back into No. 1 stage until I had earned 24 marks.

So they took away my mattress and library book, stopped my letters, and cancelled a visit for which my father and mother had arranged to travel nearly 700 miles in order to see me for twenty minutes.

(I have been told by prisoners that there is a similar "catch" about the oakum picking in some prisons. Whenever the warders like, they can get a prisoner into trouble either for not picking the quantity or not picking it fine enough.)

Next day, instead of the C.O.'s drilling in a body by themselves, we were told to fall in with an armed party and run about skirmishing and so forth. I refused, and got three days' P.D., the No. 1 stage persisting as a matter of course. While on P.D. they took the nosebags away and gave them to someone else, so that at the expiration of the punishment I was told to make sandbags. I refused on the ground that, although nosebags were capable of being used for innocent purposes, sandbags were distinctly of a military character. Result: kept back in first stage until I had earned 40 marks more. Then I got another three days' P.D. over the armed party business, and so did not expiate my crimes until the 2nd of August—having been without letters, etc. (the most serious privation) for sixteen days, six of which had been on bread and water diet. I also lost the remission which could have been earned by full marks and would, if granted in full, have sent me out by July 31st. My grandfather having died in the meantime, I was permitted to receive and reply to a telegram from my parents announcing the fact.

When I got out among the other prisoners, I found the remaining C.O.'s (eleven in number) full of a rumour about going before the Central Tribunal, but where and when this would happen they could only speculate. There were only about a dozen of us left, owing to three or four having finished their sentences, and most of the "cell men," as we called them, having been court-martialled and gone elsewhere for civil imprisonment. One poor fellow was persuaded to give in, and, getting into some trouble immediately, was court-martialled, sentenced to six months detention, and found himself back in Gosport as a full-blown soldier within a fortnight. I was far more sorry for him than anyone else. We others had had the satisfaction of being able to hold out.

I did not expect to have anything to do with the Tribunal business, but a prisoner told me that a special message had arrived by telephone the night before to the effect that I was to be sent to Wandsworth. (The telephone instrument was in the hall, and the process of giving and receiving messages sounded all over the building at night, though my cell was too far off for me ever to hear anything beyond "Hello"-ing and so forth.) Therefore, I was not surprised when I was sent into the Reception Room with the others to be weighed, have the kit inspected, and go through all sorts of formalities prior to release.

Next morning (Friday) I obtained permission to write a letter, received a large batch which had accumulated during my punishments, was passed by the medical officer and, after breakfast, went down



with the other C.O.'s to await the arrival of an escort. It is exceedingly difficult to find out what prison authorities are intending to do, and I did not know until then where we were bound. The others were carrying their kits, and not wishing to make any trouble before them I asked the Sergeant who was looking after us to note that while I was prepared to use the things there as a prisoner, I was done with them the moment I stepped outside. What happened to the kit was not my affair. Instead of quietly speaking to me about it, various Sergeants of increasing authority came out and ordered me to carry the kit. Another C.O. who had a rifle and knapsack was told to take them to Wandsworth. We both refused, and after a lot of badgering were taken separately before the Commandant. He told me that the object of the visit was to go before the Central Tribunal at Wandsworth, and that if I did not take the kit I should lose all chance of having my case considered. I replied, as I always did on such occasions, that I had nothing to do with the consequences, but that further than this I had never applied to go before the Tribunal and did not wish to do so. He sent me upstairs to my cell, and a Staff-Sergeant came two or three times to see if I had relented. On the last occasion he inquired if, supposing they got a conveyance to carry the kit to the station, I would lift it on and off. I said, "No. I will have nothing to do with it." Then I was taken before the Commandant again, and when passing through the hall saw that all the other kits were laid in a row, so that presumably the other

C.O.'s were back in their cells. A conveyance of some sort was outside the gate. I just saw a wheel as the little wicket opened and shut.

The Commandant was quite cross by this time, and said that the whole reason for my objection was that I was too lazy to carry the kit. I went back to my cell without retorting, and when dinner-time arrived, I heard that the others had gone, and that I should remain until the end of my sentence.

In the afternoon (being the anniversary of the outbreak of war), we had a special service, jointly conducted by the Anglican and Wesleyan Chaplains, at which the latter gave a very good address. At the suggestion of the Anglican Chaplain we sang a hymn of praise for what he called the two principal successes of the war: "the retreat from Mons and the brilliant evacuation of the Dardanelles."

Next day, Saturday, I was not on report for punishment as I expected, so having got back into No. 2 stage, I applied for a mattress and library book, which, after the matter had been submitted to the Sergeant-Major's office, were issued all right.

On Sunday we had a sermon with a text for once: "Blessed are the peacemakers," the line being that the soldier was the real peacemaker and not the people who "loll'd in armchairs" and "talked about the brotherhood of man." If I had seen the Chaplain again I should have reminded him of the "Pious Editor's Creed":

"I du believe that grape an' ball

Air Goodwill's strongest magnets

An' Peace, to make it stick at all

Shu'd be druv in with bag'nets."

August 7th was not a Bank Holiday in the outside world, I believe, but it was like Sunday with us. I was reading quietly in the afternoon when the door unlocked. "Come along," said the Sergeant, "and bring all your things." Down in the hall I was told I was off to Wandsworth. A Staff-Sergeant went to get a packet of bread and cheese for the journey—a most unusual thing, I should imagine, for a prisoner to be given: usually no one cares what happens to him—and after saying "Good-bye" to all the N.C.O.'s who were readily available, I quitted Gosport Detention Barracks. A last despairing effort was made to induce me to carry the kit, but I refused to do so, and it remained behind.

My escort only consisted of a Sergeant who was slightly lame, and seemed to be armed with nothing more formidable than a walking stick. Having been a Metropolitan policeman before the war, he was no doubt quite wide awake, however, and would have caught me if I had tried to run away. I did not try.

We travelled by a slow, crowded train, with a couple of changes and some waiting, until the train reached Vauxhall. From the platform I could see Whitehall Court and the National Liberal Club, where I had slept in a proper bed for the last time some months before. We took another train back to Clapham Junction, and walked up to Wandsworth Prison from there.

It seemed like a dream to be really walking along a London street again, to see 'buses and trams, with now and then a solitary taxi-cab. As we drew up

the hill towards the Common my spirits rose with almost every step, and I had forgotten all about being a prisoner and in military uniform when we first caught sight of the prison. Just at that moment a tall officer passed with a lady. The Sergeant saluted, but I felt that somehow I had not done what was considered to be the proper thing. (I cannot describe the feeling, but no doubt everyone has experienced it.)

The officer stopped a couple of paces behind us and called out in what I thought was an exceedingly contemptuous drawl, "Is that one of those CONSCIEN-TIOUS objectors?" We turned round. "Yes, sir," said the Sergeant, "just come from Gosport, sir." "Oh, you're the fellow who wouldn't carry his kit, are you?" snarled the officer. "What d'you mean by playing the silly ass like that?" I looked at him steadily, but did not speak. "Playing the ass," he repeated, for want of something to say. "I don't know *who* or *what* you are," I said, surveying him as though I thought he were a prize specimen, and speaking as deliberately as possible, "but you've no business to stop me in the public street and speak like that." "What I mean is—," he began. "No business at all," I interrupted, raising my voice, and seeing that I had him at a disadvantage. "No business at all, and you ought to know it!" The officer bit his moustache, and then, realising that the lady was waiting for him, turned and went off.

"D'you know who he is?" I said to the Sergeant. "No—Major of some sort," he replied, "perhaps



he has to do with the barracks." We walked on towards the gate. I was thinking mainly of my brave friend Norman who suffered there; how the different allotment of our regiments at the Recruiting Office had sent us on such divergent paths; wondering whether I could have borne physical ill-treatment if it had been my lot, and thinking how grateful to him we all ought to be. The removal of that Commandant would have effects reaching, perhaps, much further than we knew. "Wandsworth: the ZABERN of England!" Should we remember it in some such phrase?

The Sergeant had been chuckling over the episode with the officer, and as soon as we reached the gate he inquired from one of the blue-coated civil warders. "Oh! that's the new Commandant," was the reply. "You'll be before him in the morning," said the Sergeant to me. "Not a very good beginning," I observed.

Wandsworth Prison was being used both for civil and military purposes, we found. The Detention Barracks entrance was round to the left. Arriving there and ringing the bell, we waited for a few minutes. "What d'you want?" said someone through a broken piece of glass. "Hi! they want to *come in!*" he called to a man inside in tones which suggested that we were guilty of the greatest impudence. (I suppose this was because it was rather late.) Presently the door unlocked and we stepped inside, and found ourselves at the end of a long hall with cells and balconies, the further end of which was already getting dim and dark. It was much wider

and more lofty than the whole prison at Gosport. Going into a side room, the Sergeant rendered some particulars. "Conscientious objector, is he?" said the Staff-Sergeant who received us. "Adjective nuisances, I call 'em." "Religion?" he said to me. "Wesleyan," I replied. "All right. Shove him in K," was the remark. (It seems that Roman Catholics are all together at this barracks.) The Sergeant from Gosport had three pounds belonging to me which we could not break into on the journey as it had been "sent on" for safe custody at Wandsworth. "No," they "never give no receipts," he was informed, but eventually he got one and prepared to go. "Gave him no smokes, did you?" queried an official. "No, I don't go in for that kind of thing," replied the Sergeant. "Then we'll do him in the morning," they decided, and calling out "Good-bye" to the Gosport Sergeant, I was marched off to another hall marked on the walls with the letter K. "Better have some water first," I suggested as they put me inside. "All right, hurry up, there's the tap," responded one of the men. "What stage are you on? Number two? Well, go over there and get a bed." I got the bed, and having ascertained that there was no running down to wash, but that I must dress fully when the bell rang in the morning, I was shut in the cell, feeling very disappointed and upset at the general behaviour of the Wandsworth men. This feeling was increased when, finding a cat behind the bed-board, I could not get any response by pulling the bell handle, and had to kick the door until someone

came up with curses to know what I was "making all that row for." Between us we "shooed" the cat out, and I soon got to sleep quite comfortably. The bed was an improvement on the ones at Gosport, I found. So was the cell.

Next morning I was taken out quite early and marched over to another building, where I was placed in Hall C. The number of my cell was "C.3.33," meaning Hall C, third floor, room 33. It was a good deal bigger than those at Gosport or Winchester. There was a good tiled floor and quite an excellent window consisting of twenty panes of clear glass about the size of postcards. They were set in a strong iron frame, in appearance not unlike a heavily-leaded window. The bed, shelves and tins were much the same as at Gosport, but the chamber utensil was of strong earthenware—saving at least half an hour's cleaning per day—and there was a washing bowl. On the table lay a volume of the *English Illustrated Magazine*. Everything was moderately quiet, the prisoners walked instead of "doubling," and the Sergeants did not seem to feel it incumbent upon them to be always shouting. Two came to have a look at me. "Seen about you in the papers," one said. "Suppose you know Norman. Fine chap Norman was," he continued, "took to me like anything." I said that I was very glad to hear it, and they went on to say something which in substance was repeated by every N.C.O. who spoke to me at Wandsworth—from the Sergeant-Majors downward. This was that:

- (1) No one ever touched Norman at all. What he said at the court-martial was pure imagination.
- (2) The people who did it were the "civvies" (civil warders) when he was taken to hospital.
- (3) My informant was particularly sympathetic and kind to Norman in all his troubles.
- (4) Very strict precautions were being taken that nothing of the sort should occur again.

The breakfast consisted of brownish bread (not unlike Hovis) and skilly—cocoa being given at night, they said. Afterwards I was sent with a number of other prisoners to pass the doctor. We walked across to the building I had entered at first, and were arranged in batches according to the purpose for which we had come. I was glad to note that men on punishment diet were brought up, and I think they went before the Commandant as well. Apart from the safeguard to health, the walk across would be a welcome change. Three days seems a long time when it is passed on bread and water in a cell.

Having gone before the doctor, I stood for some little time with a dozen or fifteen other "admissions"—all C.O.'s. They were from different parts of the country; some from Wakefield, and one or two from Perth. Being in front, I was standing quite properly and looking straight in front of me, but behind there was a little moving and whispering. "None of your adjectival religion here!" said a young Australian Corporal who was near by. He



was dressed in a sort of bushranger or Buffalo Bill get-up, and could never be still for a moment. All the time he was interfering, and poking or pushing in one place or another. "The Corporals are always the worst," someone commented. Then, after persecuting some lads in another party, he came back and surveyed us very contemptuously, making sneering remarks about C.O.'s in general, and watching for someone to catch talking or committing some other grievous fault. Presently he stopped in front of me and, seeing that I was apparently ignoring his comments, said, "What are you in—the Grenadier Guards or what?" He knew, of course, that I was not tall enough for the Guards, but whether he was alluding to Norman (who was put in the Grenadiers) I do not know. Anyway, I did not speak. "Answer me!" he cried quite petulantly. "Ask me a proper question and I will do so," I said. "Stand to attention," he ordered, and, seizing me by the arms, shook me rather violently. "That will do," I said. "What is your name?" "Corporal So-and-so," he replied, in a rather different tone, and immediately went away. "Will you be a witness for me?" I whispered to my neighbour. "If so, I'll have this fellow on report immediately." He agreed, but before I could speak to anyone else the Corporal and a Staff-Sergeant came along. "Staff," I said, clicking my heels together in the official manner, "I wish you to put this Corporal on report for insulting language and using violence. These men are my witnesses." The "Staff" seemed uneasy about it, and said I had better see the Sergeant-Major. Then

he went off with the Corporal and confabulated. Presently the Corporal came back with a pencil, took my name and room number, and informed me that I should be on report next morning for refusing to stand to attention when ordered.

From the place at which we were standing during that episode we went up to the other end of the hall and waited before the Commandant's room. This was at a junction of three halls lettered respectively G, H, and K, and arranged like a leaf of shamrock. At the centre was a dome-covered space where groups of prisoners and N.C.O.'s were assembled, and from which the operations of the prison seemed to be directed. The blackboard of prison statistics was posted up there, and I noticed that the number of prisoners was 588. There were two Sergeants-Major, one going in and out of the Commandant's Room and the other walking about. When the latter passed near enough, I said that I wished to speak to him about making a complaint. He took me out of the ranks, listened very considerately to what I had to say, and told me that the best way would be to mention the matter direct to the Commandant. I replied that I would do so, but thought it better to let him know before making a formal complaint. Then I stepped back into line with the others, and waited until called into the room before the Commandant. He was the officer I had seen the previous evening, but his manner was entirely different. No one could have laid himself out to be more ingratiatingly pleasant. A young officer sat by the table, and the Senior Sergeant-Major stood opposite.

The first point was about the Tribunal. He had heard I did not wish to go before this body, he said. Why was that? I explained what had happened at Gosport, and said that I was quite content to wait until there was some answer to the suggestion I had made to the Civil Committee or until my release, which would be in another week. In answer to further questions, I said that the tribunal system was wrong in principle and absurd in practice. No one could test the genuineness of a man's convictions about warfare by asking what he would do if a German were murdering his mother or asking conundrums of any sort. If this were the old Central Appeal Tribunal I refused to have anything to do with it. "Who were the people on that Tribunal?" the Commandant asked. "Lord S— was one," I responded. "Well, he's on this," remarked the Commandant. "It looks as if they were the same lot."

Then the Sergeant-Major fetched some papers and the Commandant read me something about the "scheme" for civil employment. There seemed to be a great many "ifs" and "buts" about it, and I gathered that *if* the Tribunal passed me with a first-class conscience *and* the Civil Committee were so disposed *and* the War Office concurred, I *might*—not be discharged from the Army or anything of that kind—but, if I promised to be *very* good, transferred to Section W of the Army Reserve, with liability to be called up to the colours again whenever the authorities pleased. During the time while graciously permitted to remain in Section W, I must

be the Home Office Committee's most obedient, humble servant. I must live and labour exactly where they chose—probably at some workhouse preparing road material in a kind of convict gang. Further than this, my conduct must in all respects be "satisfactory" to the said Committee, their heirs, executors, administrators and assigns. I must comply with all regulations they or any of them might take the fancy to concoct, and, finally, if I omitted to observe one jot or one tittle of all these rules, orders, regulations, etc., etc., I should forthwith be snatched back into the Army again. I do not say that the Commandant explained the position in this language, but that was the effect of it, and I said at once that I should certainly prefer to stay in prison indefinitely than have anything to do with such a scheme. "But you don't want to be locked up for two or three years?" exclaimed the Commandant. "I don't *want* to be," I replied, "any more than most soldiers want to go to the trenches again." "They go because they think it is their duty," he observed. "Quite so," I responded, "and I think it my duty to refuse this scheme."

So that I might not be under any misapprehension about the Government proposals, I obtained permission to wire to a Parliamentary friend informing him that I had been transferred to Wandsworth, and should be glad if someone could call to see me. The telegram being written out and passed by the Commandant, he said that he would speak to the Tribunal himself and see if my case could be put back until I had obtained further information. I said that I had no



wish to see the Tribunal at all, but the Commandant replied that he thought I should have to do so, and I thanked him for his kindness.

Then I brought up the question of the Australian Corporal, and stated I wished to make a formal complaint. "Oh, no!" said the Commandant, "I'll speak to him privately if you like and see what it's all about." This would not suit me, and I pressed for the man to be charged properly. "But he'll say he didn't do it," objected the Commandant. I replied that there were a dozen prisoners standing by. "Well, the C.O.'s may have seen it," said the Commandant, "but you can depend upon it that the others didn't." "They were all C.O.'s," I responded, "there can be no conflict of evidence." Met on that point, the Commandant suggested that it was not to my interest to get across the N.C.O.'s, and finding that I was not much intimidated by that prospect, he said, well, the fact was that it was extremely difficult to do anything with Australians. They were like Conscientious Objectors—a race apart. Any ordinary N.C.O. he would have been willing to string up at once. I said that if men chose to enter the Army they ought to observe its rules, and that it was rather strange for a Commandant to refuse to maintain discipline. If he could not do anything, I must make my complaint to the Visiting Officer.

"Very well, I'll deal with it," said the Commandant, "but isn't the fact really that you have heard something about Norman's case and are rather prejudiced against this place?" I said that certainly

I thought Norman's case gave me good reason to be prejudiced, and that when deciding to report this Corporal, I was no doubt influenced by the bad impression gained from the way I was received the night before, and particularly the unfortunate incident which took place with the Commandant himself in the street. "My dear fellow, I only asked you a simple question, and you flew at me like anything," said the Commandant, and the Sergeant-Major, on being appealed to, said he could assure me positively that no one laid a finger on Norman the whole time he was in the place. "Then why was Colonel B— removed?" I asked, but before the question could be answered, the Commandant broke in with an idea about the evidence in the Australian case. Instead of having him up on report the next day and giving me permission to see my witnesses meanwhile to prepare the evidence, he thought the fairest thing would be to have the men in one by one now, and see what they said. I agreed, provided I could put the questions, but the Commandant wanted to conduct the whole inquiry himself. Eventually it was settled that being the prosecutor, I had the right to call the witnesses and the Commandant's duty was to be the judge, but on the other hand I must be careful not to "lead" on important points, *i.e.*, ask questions which would suggest the answer I wanted.

The first man was then called in. The Commandant having got his name, I asked: "Were you standing with me outside the medical officer's room half an hour ago?"

ANSWER: "Yes."

QUESTION: "Did you see an Australian Corporal there?"

ANSWER: "Yes."

QUESTION: "Did you see him say or do anything to me?"

ANSWER: "Yes."

Then I said: "Please tell the Commandant what you saw and heard."

The witness did so, and, at the Commandant's suggestion, demonstrated by seizing the Sergeant-Major in the way described.

When the next man came in we went through the same process, and I said there was no need to trouble the Commandant with any more evidence. I would leave the case in his hands to deal with. He said that the Corporal must understand that such conduct could not be tolerated. Very severe action would be taken in future. He was much obliged to me for bringing the case to his notice. Oh! the time and trouble did not matter—this was the sort of thing he was paid for.

So I came out of the Commandant's room—no doubt leaving him looking forward to the time when Conscientious Objectors would all be packed off. Army people are, to use their own slang, already quite "fed up."

From there I was taken by two non-commissioned officers to the room in which the Tribunal was sitting. Fifty or sixty C.O.'s were waiting outside. My turn was about a dozen down, it seemed, so I fell in the line and a mimeographed letter was handed to me as I was standing there. It was as follows:

W.5b

CENTRAL TRIBUNAL,  
Queen Anne's Chambers,  
Tothill Street,

Please quote: W.626.

Westminster, S.W.

Sir,

7th August, 1916.

I am desired by the Central Tribunal to inform you that your case has been sent to them by the Army Council in order that the Tribunal may determine, in the light of the information which may now be available, whether you have a conscientious objection to military service based on religious or moral grounds.

Members of the Central Tribunal will attend at Wandsworth D.B. on an early date, when an opportunity will be given to you of being heard by them as to your conscientious objection.

If you do not avail yourself of the opportunity of being heard or if, after having been heard, the Central Tribunal are not satisfied that you have a conscientious objection to military service based on religious or moral grounds, the Central Tribunal are informed that you will remain under the control of the military authorities.

If, on the other hand, after consideration of your case the Tribunal are satisfied that you have a conscientious objection to military service based on religious or moral grounds, you will be transferred to Section W of the Army Reserve, whereupon you will cease to be subject to military discipline and the Army Act, as also to draw pay from Army funds; and your case will be sent to the Civil Committee which has been appointed by the Home



Office, in order that you may be placed on civil work under civil control, and under conditions to be determined by that Committee. You will be allowed to continue at civil work so long as your conduct is satisfactory to the Committee. If you should fail to comply with the conditions laid down by the Committee, you will be recalled from Section W of the Army Reserve and will be sent back to your unit, and will again be fully subject to military discipline and the Army Act.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) J. W. READING.

For Central Tribunal.

Pte. J. Scott Duckers.

Please note that the first time I saw this paper was a few minutes before being actually taken into the room, and that as all the other C.O.'s were being given copies addressed to them (except a few for whom other men's letters had to be borrowed), I presume it was intended by the authorities that we should have the least possible time to comprehend the scheme. Certainly no one had gone into the question with the Commandant, and I had no opportunity of telling anyone what he had told me.

Presently the Commandant and the Sergeant-Major came and looked along the line. "Scott Duckers here?" the Commandant asked. I clicked my heels together. "Oh, I say," he remarked before all the others. "It's no good you waiting about all day. If you like, I'll tell the Tribunal you don't want to have anything to do with them and you won't accept the scheme." I said that I should be exceedingly obliged,

and the Commandant went into the room, while the other C.O.'s leaned forward to try to have a look at me, and someone behind warmly pressed my hand.

"It's no good," he announced presently. "They insist on seeing you, and say you'll have to take your turn." I thanked him again and waited.

When my turn came I went into a well-lighted place furnished something like a board room. Three persons were seated at a long table. The one I presumed to be Lord S— was in the centre, Mr. B—, M.P. (whom I recognised) was on his right, and someone else—presumably the Secretary—sat arranging papers on the left.

"I think there's some misunderstanding," I said. "I really don't wish to appear before you, and I have never had anything to do with the tribunal system." "Oh, yes, you're Mr. Duckers," the Chairman said very pleasantly. "We know something about your case. What is your objection to the tribunals?" I told them, and laid stress on the inability of any body of men, however capable, to get at the genuineness of an objector's convictions by asking questions. The most ready answer did not prove the most real belief. "But we try to be as fair as we possibly can," said the Chairman. I replied that I was making no personal reflection at all. The system was bad in itself, apart from the way in which it had been administered. The Chairman said that he took quite another view. As a magistrate he often had to judge what was in a man's mind, and thought it quite possible to find it out by questions. "That is quite different," I responded,

"there you deal not with the mind alone but with definite acts from which you infer the belief or the intention. You find a man in possession of somebody else's watch, and judge whether he intended to steal it. In those cases you deal chiefly with facts and pay very little attention to what a man says he believed or thought."

Well, anyway, if I would answer their questions, he thought I should be satisfied with their fairness, the Chairman suggested, but after a little more discussion I got him to understand, quite definitely, that I refused to have anything to do with the Tribunal itself or with the scheme in general.

"I hope you don't think that I wish to show any rudeness or discourtesy," I said when leaving. "No," replied the Chairman, "we don't think that, but we think you are very obstinate."

Next day I had to go across to the place again. While waiting with the group of C.O.'s—a new batch this time—the Sergeant had some conversation with me about the Tribunal, and wished to know if I had changed my mind. When they worked down as far as my place in the list, the Secretary came and asked me to wait outside a few minutes. Presently the Sergeant was called into the room, and after a few seconds came out to say I was not wanted again.

While waiting this second time, I saw what was perhaps the saddest sight I remember. We were in part of the civil prison, and a visiting justice or some such person was sitting in a room adjoining that devoted to the Tribunal. Prisoners in broad-arrow costume were brought out one by one through a large

doorway, and marched across the hall. As the door opened I could see lines of prisoners waiting on the other side. They started first with tiny boys. I am no good at estimating children's ages, but at least three looked about the smallest size in choir boys. The last to come were white-haired and white-bearded old men. The succession of faces was just like the bottom row in Cassell's famous advertisement: "The child: what will he become?"

"What a shame to put that little fellow in a place like this!" I exclaimed to the Sergeant. A warder who was standing by said that the boy was a confirmed criminal, and had just been sentenced for stealing. His family were all thieves. "Well, Lloyd George used to talk as though Lord S——'s family were all thieves," I said. "Do you remember a speech about even their primroses growing on stolen Church lands? Yet Lord S—— is in that room finding out whether men have consciences or not, so that he can advise Lloyd George. If this boy's ancestors had stolen something the size of Hatfield d'you suppose he would have been here now?" This sounded "like politics," they said, without committing themselves.

During the remainder of the days at Wandsworth I got on very well with everybody. The whole place was much easier than Gosport. "Best detention barracks there is," I was informed by one prisoner. The food was better, the work lighter; there was no "doubling," and the bathing, washing and sanitary arrangements were far superior. The drilling was unpleasant because it took place on a cinder parade



ground, and we became covered with black dust. The air was not refreshing as at Gosport.

The buildings pleased me. They were all large halls arranged in three-fold pattern, with a sort of central dome. The material was greyish yellow brick, but everything was constructed in that style of plain, yet costly, solidness which marks most public buildings of Queen Victoria's reign. The structures which last through centuries are those on which nations lavish their greatest care and skill. Our ideas of the past are largely taken from great architectural remains—Egyptian tombs, Grecian temples, Norman castles, are regarded as "typical" of the age to which they belong. Will the civilization of our time be known in future ages chiefly by the massive ruins of prisons, workhouses and asylums? We are apt to think (probably quite unjustly) of Norman barons as monsters of cruelty who were always burning homesteads and putting people in dungeons. Will this "land of freedom" be thought of as one where the best energies of the ruling classes were devoted to putting other people under lock and key?

Sunday service was in a fine chapel with some good carving, which I was told had been done entirely by prisoners. A very sweetly-toned pipe organ played voluntaries and hymn tunes. A hard labour prisoner in broad-arrow costume stood up to blow. The members of the congregation were all in military uniform, and consisted of our 500 odd prisoners, less the Roman Catholics and a few who were ill or did not want to go. About 130 were C.O.'s. As we filed out after the service I caught sight of the

organist who was playing so beautifully. He was a civil prisoner wearing the dress of the Second Division. "Poor man!" I thought, and yet perhaps he was so happy at his organ that he needed no pity from me or from anyone!

I sewed mail bags as my task at Wandsworth, and got through them so easily that there was plenty of time to read. The books were supplied by the civil authorities, and someone came round to change them on Wednesdays. I was told that there was no choice, but that the librarian simply left a book which he thought suitable. (This information was from a prisoner, and may only express the practice. Probably there is some method by which prisoners can choose books if they are really anxious to do so.) "What kind of books does he give you?" I inquired. "Splendid," was the reply. "I've got a volume of the *Boys' Friend*." This rather made me expect to get something like *Comic Cuts*, or some production of the Harmsworth penny dreadful department. Great was my surprise and pleasure to find that three books had been left for me: (1) Another *Illustrated Magazine*; (2) *Ants, Bees and Wasps*, by Sir John Lubbock; and (3) *The Autocrat at the Breakfast Table*. This last I seized with delight, and turned up the place where, in one of the early essays, Oliver Wendell Holmes says that if you get into the most unfamiliar place—say in prison for some atrocious crime—you will find yourself one of a line stretching back to the time of Cain and Abel, and a man at your elbow who understands all the circumstances.

My day for release at Wandsworth was Tuesday, August 15th, and in the meantime the kit had come on from Gosport. As it only arrived the day before, I did not trouble with it. The Sergeant who had taken me from Winchester to Gosport came to escort me from Wandsworth to a camp of the Rifle Brigade at Sheerness. We understood one another, and had a little friendly performance, in which he ordered me to pick up the kit and I "refused absolutely." A charge sheet was made out, and then I went with him out of Wandsworth Prison and started my next experience of soldiering, with the prospect of being sent back to prison very soon.

It was in the cool of the evening when we reached Minster, near Sheerness, where the 5th Battalion was stationed. A wooden hut encampment nestled round some workhouse buildings on high ground near the sea. The sun was setting London way in a bright blaze of red and gold. We had a pleasant walk through some fields, and then threaded our way through the camp to the wooden guard room where I am now writing. For the first night I was put in a large room with several other prisoners. They were all soldiers, for I am the first C.O. to come this way. Next morning I was transferred to a separate cell. It would have made a good fowl house or tool shed, I thought, but certainly no one would use it for the purpose of housing a pet animal. The furniture was absolutely nil. Another prisoner was there, and the atmosphere seemed stifling. Above all, it was exceedingly dark. A little window designed to admit direct light opened under a wide

verandah which obscured the sky entirely. I felt that I should become ill immediately. But it is wonderful to what we can adjust ourselves. Also the Provost-Sergeant (pronounced "Prov-o," the "st" being silent) who had charge of me was very kind. After sleeping one night on the floor I got a plank bed, which is a slight improvement, because the planks sag a little and it is not so cold. The other prisoner was turned out, and the floor scrubbed by somebody. The darkness did not feel so trying when I had been there a fortnight, though the bulk of the time I had to do my writing more by faith than by sight, except in the very middle of the day. To read letters I always had to stand up close to the light.

The Colonel told me one day that "As evidently we can't do anything with you in this country, I've recommended that your court-martial be dispensed with and you be sent out at once." Nothing came of this, and I suppose the next thing will be a term of civil imprisonment.

If I have dwelt too much on the unpleasant things, it has been unintentional. I have tried to give an accurate record. On the whole I have been wonderfully happy and in good spirits all the time. There has been no real depression, and two or three sick headaches are all the physical troubles I have had. In compensation for the absence of things I used to think were necessities, I have abundance in other ways. That a man's life consisteth not in abundance of the things which he possesseth I have indeed proved to be most wonderfully true.



## CONCLUDING NOTE

MR. SCOTT DUCKERS underwent a second Court-Martial on August 29th, 1916. After formal evidence had been given, Mr. Duckers made the following statement:

"My case is that I am not a soldier. I have not taken the oath or touched a penny of the pay; there has been no medical examination, and my attestation form is still unfilled. After being over four months in the hands of the military they have only succeeded in taking away my own clothes and giving me the uniform of a military prison. I have never worn a regimental badge, and, despite repeated stretches of bread and water diet and other punishments, they have failed to make me handle a rifle, drill with an armed party, learn saluting, or even manufacture sandbags, though it is only fair to say I have never suffered any illegal violence or felt that the punishments were imposed vindictively. On the contrary, I experienced innumerable acts of kindness and sympathy both from the non-commissioned officers and men. The ordinary routine of prison work I observed quite willingly, and after a series of interesting and, on the whole, not particularly dreadful experiences, I am prepared to go through the process again.

" . . . . Therefore I say I am not a soldier, and that if you condemn me as such you can only do so by ignoring the facts and relying on a piece of Parliamentary make-believe.

"But refusing to be a soldier is not now my real crime. The crime is that I have declined to escape from soldiering by accepting the Government scheme.

This may not be a defence to the charge before you, but if you decide to impose a sentence the following circumstances should be considered:

"The Prime Minister made a statement on June 29th, and shortly afterwards I was asked by the Commandant at Gosport what kind of civil employment I would undertake if set free. Seeing that my own business was destroyed, I said that I should have to seek a situation, and that I would willingly accept any kind of reasonable employment of the sort for which I was qualified. When asked to name some kind of national industry in which my services might be useful, I mentioned the legal department of a railway company. The result was that at the suggestion of the Commandant I wrote a letter setting out my views.\*

"I never heard anything in reply to this letter, but towards the end of July I was asked three or four times if I wished to apply to go before the Central Tribunal in connection with what was vaguely called 'the scheme.' I said, 'What is the scheme?' and finding no one could tell me, said that I would wait until some details transpired. Matters remained like this until August 7th, when, without any desire or consent on my part, I was sent to Wandsworth by special escort in order to go before the Central Tribunal. On arrival there I saw the Commandant, and explained that I was almost completely in the dark and had no desire to go before the Tribunal at all. He sent for some official papers, and very kindly did all he could to let me know the position of affairs—the result being that I found the so-called 'scheme' outlined industrial conscription of a particularly objectionable kind. When I said that I would have nothing to do with it and did not wish to see the Tribunal, the reply was that the Tribunal insisted on seeing me, and that I must go. Being a prisoner, I was taken by two non-commissioned

\*See page 117

officers to the Tribunal Room, and had to explain my position over again. Quite definitely, but I hope not offensively, I refused to have anything to do either with the Tribunal itself or the scheme in general.

"As you can see by an answer given by Mr. Forster in the House of Commons on August 21st, that is why I have been sent back into the Army, and all I wish to say is, I have no intention of submitting to industrial conscription, and that the reasons which compelled me to repudiate the claim of the Government to make me a soldier prevent me from bargaining myself out of that claim by accepting the scheme.

"I have nothing to do with the consequences; they rest with you."

\* \* \* \* \*

On September 2nd, the sentence of one year's imprisonment with hard labour was "read out."

He was not allowed to wire this information to his friends because the military authorities "didn't want anything in the papers," and when he started off to prison he did not know his destination. He was sent to the Kent local prison at Maidstone. He was set to work making mail bags, and found no difficulty in getting through his appointed task in seven hours, although ten hours was the time allowed. The remaining three hours he spent in reading solid literature—for example, Thorold Rogers's *The British Citizen: His Rights and Privileges*, but he found that there was hardly a constitutional safeguard in the whole book which had not been swept away since the beginning of the war. Among other books which he read were Morley's *Burke and Cobden*, *John Wesley's Journal*, Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, the works of Josephus, and Boswell's *Hebrides*, besides various volumes of Ruskin and Carlyle.

During his first day in prison he was taken to see the Governor—a dapper little man with carefully brushed hair. “Are you what is called a conscientious objector?” he inquired. “I am.” “And you’re sentenced to twelve months’ hard labour, you’re a Wesleyan, you can read and write, and you had twenty-eight and tenpence in your possession?” he continued, glibly reading off a printed form. “Quite true.” “Do you object to attending Church of England services?” “Not at all.” Satisfied on these points, the Governor marked something on the form and he was told to go back and be sure to shut the door of his cell.

The next morning, when he was ordered to take exercise, he found himself one of a procession of twenty-three, and he thought he had seldom or never seen anything so hideous. The natural repulsiveness of the prison clothes (and particularly the horrible little caps) was increased by the way in which they hung awkwardly upon most of the prisoners. Several had sleeves or trousers turned up for some inches, and all were more or less unshaven and unkempt. Presumably some were there for the reason that he was, so he catalogued a few of them in his mind as likely C.O.’s—particularly the pale lads with glasses—and put down the stubbly-bearded as notorious criminals. Most of them gave him a sort of welcoming smile, but no one spoke until they were going in, when the man behind him whispered, “We’re all C.O.’s here,” and he found his classification was completely wrong.

He attended Church of England services on Wednesdays and Saturdays and twice on Sundays, and every three weeks he attended a Nonconformist service conducted by the Wesleyan minister, but when the Quaker chaplain asked permission to see him, this request was refused.

In spite of prison discipline, he found little diffi-



culty in getting into communication with other prisoners, some of whom were convicts. He came to the conclusion that drink was their failing, and that otherwise most of them were good-natured fellows. Even what he thought at first to be the most criminal and bestial countenances began to seem more intelligent and human—especially when he tried to picture the men as they would appear in respectable clothes, or arrayed in wig and gown. This last plan was quite a revelation, because he found that the most vicious-looking faces were really no worse than certain well-known judges and eminent K.C.'s.

The warders, he found, were classified by the prisoners as "good screws" or "rotters." The "good screws" are those who do not enforce discipline when no other warder is at hand: the "rotters" are those who always enforce the rules all the time—in other words, do the work for which they are employed.

He found it a common thing for men to be convicted of crime twenty times; some even had fifty, sixty or seventy convictions. He came to the conclusion that a professional criminal, finding the outside world hostile, prefers the friendly atmosphere of prison where he is among companions who cannot point the finger of scorn at him.

Every week the prisoners are entertained with a lecture on the progress of the war, but C.O.'s are not allowed to hear these lectures.

After he had been some months in prison, he was informed that his sentence had been reduced to 140 days, and that he would leave prison within a few days.

After leaving Maidstone on the 23rd December, 1916, Mr. Scott Duckers was taken back to the Rifle Brigade Camp at Minster. For the next three days he was allowed to go freely about the island on

which the Camp is situated, and was able to have several pleasant walks as well as to join with the soldiers in their Christmas festivities. Everywhere he was welcomed most cordially, and on Christmas Day the soldiers gave him three cheers. The soldier who called for the cheers said, "We should all do like Scott Duckers if we thought we could stick it out!"

On Wednesday, December 27th, he was placed in one of the guardroom cells for being absent from parade. Finally he was tried at Sheerness Barracks four weeks afterwards for "wilful defiance of military authority," and sentenced to two years' hard labour, which he is now serving in Maidstone Prison. The trial was by District Court-Martial again, as the Commanding Officer's request for a General Court was not acceded to by the higher authorities. At the hearing Mr. Scott Duckers read and handed in the following statement:

"As this is my third trial by court-martial I presume that by now you know something of my views. Though not adopted since the commencement, or merely for the duration, of the present war, they have certainly been strengthened by the experiences I have gone through. The more I see of the Army the less I like it, and the greater is my determination to show that the punishments by which you are accustomed to subdue the spirits of soldiers are quite ineffective against anyone who knows his own mind and will continue steadfast. Whatever happens to me personally, I know that I have done something to maintain those principles of freedom which can only be preserved by individuals, and which will, perhaps more quickly than you think, successfully reassert themselves against all the muddle, waste, mismanagement and blundering incompetence of modern militarism, which these ridiculous trials help to illustrate."







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